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## 1972: Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures - Full Text

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AND  
THE FUTURE

being the

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## PREFACE

The church of Jesus Christ is a blood-bought body. It was built and paid for by the Lord of Glory. It is the “pillar and ground of the truth” and every saved person who lives has been added to that body by the Lord Himself. And Jesus, when He promised to build His church, also promised that “the gates of Hell” would not prevail against it.

Yet, insidious forces are at work against this divine body both within and without. Many people are discouraged and disillusioned by the lethargy, the indifference, the coldness, the ugly “politics” and the constant fighting which they see in local congregations. Many young people are turning their backs on the church, proclaiming it “irrelevant,” “filled with hypocrites,” and worse. Others are asking, “What has all this to do with me and my life? Is this *really* the church which Jesus built and which He promised to save?”

Before we give answers which are too simple, let us remember that, though the church itself is eternal, no local congregation of the church is assured that it will not drift and lose its identity. Where are the congregations of the Lord’s people which flourished during the first and second centuries? What forces led them into apostasy? Are similar forces at work in local congregations today? If so, what can be done to stop the drift and to bring the people of God again into proper relation to the Head of the church?

The general purpose of the Annual Bible Lectureship at Abilene Christian College is to further the cause of Christ, and this is the real reason why the College itself exists. The Annual Lectureship Program inspires Christians and furnishes them information and an opportunity to exchange ideas for improving their work for the Lord. The Lectureship Committee believes that this is one of the greatest gatherings in the world for achieving these purposes and welcomes ideas for improving the program.

This volume is dedicated to that multitude of faithful Christians around the world who are working faithfully in the kingdom of the Lord and looking forward to His return.

CARL BRECHEEN, Director  
The Annual Bible Lectureship



# **MAIN SPEECHES**



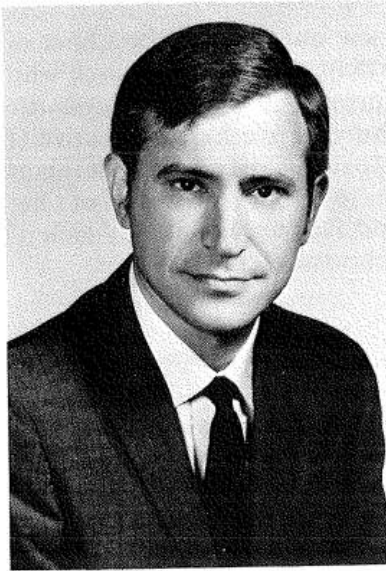
## CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

### JOHN ALLEN CHALK

John Allen Chalk lives in Austin, Texas where he is Executive Editor of the Sweet Publishing Company, a major publisher of Bible School curriculum materials, Vacation Bible School studies, and other religious works. The Sweet Company also publishes a weekly newspaper, *Christian Chronicle*, and a monthly woman's magazine, *Christian Woman*.

Mr. Chalk's ministry includes work with three churches: Northridge Church of Christ, Dayton, Ohio (1956-60); Broad Street Church of Christ, Cookeville, Tennessee (1960-66); and the Highland Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas (1969-71).

Mr. Chalk is best known for his three and one-half years of radio ministry on the "Herald of Truth," produced by the Highland Church



of Christ in Abilene, Texas. He has also written for and appeared on a number of "Herald of Truth" television programs.

Mr. Chalk's books include *The Praying Christ* (Dallas: Christian Publishing Company, 1964); *Jesus' Church* (Abilene: Biblical Research Press, 1969); and *Three American Revolutions* (New York: Carlton Press, 1970). In addition he has written many articles for religious journals and authored several tracts and Bible study booklets.

Mr. Chalk serves on the (Texas) Governor's Committee on Human Relations and is

Chairman of the committee's subcommittee on the Administration of Justice-Law Enforcement. He is married to the former Sue Traugher and is the father of two children, Mary Elizabeth and John, Jr.

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Is it not possible to say that Christ is the central truth regarding the Church while losing gradually the Biblical meanings of that truth? Are the temptations to idolatry luring today's church away from radical obedience of Jesus Christ? Christ-consciousness forms the heart of the New Testament concept of the Church and constitutes our most pressing challenge to becoming that Church in the twentieth century.

My task then is to help renew our faith in the Christ of the Church and deepen our participation in the Church who is Christ's body. Without a proper, personally authentic relationship with Christ the Church loses her perspective (I Peter 2:1-11), no longer actually exists (I Corinthians 12:12-31), experiences either loss or confusion of her direction (Ephesians 4:1-16), and fails her mission by lack of the necessary inner dynamic (Ephesians 3:14-21).

## I

One of Christ's major gifts to the Church is the focusing of both the reality and the identity of the "people of God." Jesus stands in the center of God's historic purpose first revealed in his promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).

Neither Abraham nor his descendants understood the



ultimate purpose for which God freely, lovingly elected them. God elected Israel. God redeemed Israel. God sustained Israel. Israel was the "holy people" of God for a distinct purpose (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul explains that Christ fulfilled God's purpose in electing Israel. Christ became that singular "seed" of Abraham through whom salvation was offered as God's free, loving gift to all who believe. Now, with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all men could become Abraham's seed, "heirs according to the promise," in baptismal union with Christ (Galatians 3:16, 19, 23-29).

Christ not only may be viewed as having focused God's Old Testament people by being that ultimate conclusion of God's choice of Israel. Christ may also be seen in the New Testament as the Elect One who gives all believers identity and relationship with God as his people (Ephesians 1:3-10; I Peter 2:1-11). The Christian is blessed of God in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). The Christian was chosen by God, as was Israel, in Christ (Ephesians 1:4). God claims the Christian as his own son through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5). God redeems the Christian, as he redeemed Israel, according to his historic purpose in Christ (Ephesians 1:7-9). The new Israel has its identity only in Jesus Christ. The new Israel can only live by the crucified and risen Christ.

The Apostle Peter brings both ends of this Biblical perspective together in his description of the Church as God's people (I Peter 2:1-11). At the center of this Biblical picture of the Church is Christ, the "living stone."

Peter reminds us that Christ was rejected by those from whom he descended. The very people who should have welcomed him as the fulfillment of all God had been doing with them refused him as the ultimate destiny of their nation (I Peter 2:1-4). Peter describes the new people of God, people who, just like Abraham before God's call, had no identity and were without a transcendent purpose (I Peter 2:9-10).

The difference between Old Testament and New Testament Israel, in Peter's view, is that one disbelieved and disobeyed God's revelation of his purpose while the other "people" embraced and were changed by Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:5-10). In either case Jesus Christ is the central reality for "the people of God." He focuses this people as no other event, as no other person. We cannot understand the people of God apart from Christ. Only in Christ do the Old Testament people know the realization of their destiny and only in Christ do the New Testament people have their identity.

## II

Jesus Christ is also the essence of his body's existence. Paul cannot prevent speaking interchangeably in *I Corinthians*, as an example of Christ and his body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many are one body; so also is Christ (I Corinthians 12:12)." When Paul in this passage describes the Church as Christ's body he also speaks, just as easily, of Christ himself. The identification between Christ and his body, the church, is that close.

Paul also explains in the same chapter the manner of our incorporation into that body. "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit joins us to Jesus' body in our baptism. The baptism that expresses one's faith in and surrender to Jesus as Lord and Savior provides that situation in which God promises one's union with Christ, one's addition to the body of Christ, the Church (Colossians 2:12; I Corinthians 12:13). This union with Christ in baptism--death, burial, and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 3:1-4)--is the point at which one becomes a functioning member of Christ's body (I Corinthians 12:12-31).

This explains why one of the clearest descriptions of the Church in the New Testament begins with a powerful declaration of God's gift of life to the Christian through faith in and union with Christ (Ephesians 2). Six times in the closing verses of *Ephesians 2* Paul describes the Church. Clearly for Paul, the Church is that people who have experienced God's gift of life in their obedient response to Jesus Christ.

There is no church without Christ. There is no body of Christ without God uniting believers with Jesus Christ. When we study the New Testament description of the Church as Christ's body we have to conclude that Christ is the essence of his body's existence. Without him--alive, ruling, and saving--there is no church.

### III

Christ is the central truth of the Church because he is the

Church's constant goal as well as the Church's present power (Ephesians 4:1-16). Paul understands the Church in the New Testament as an organism that experiences life, movement, and growth. God gives the Church gifts of ministry, according to Paul, for her desired maturation (Ephesians 4:11-12; Romans 12:3-8). Paul states clearly the Church's growth goal or maturity objective: ". . . till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . (Ephesians 4:13)." The measure of Christ, that same measure by which the gifts are given the Church (Ephesians 4:7), stands before the Church as her constant goal, her continuing objective.

This kind of goal calls for unusual discipline on the Church's part. Yet this discipline, when achieved, does not allow the Church to become proud and self-righteous. Christ is both "the head" or ruling lord of the Church and the one "from whom" all the members get the inner strength necessary for their individual contributions to the Church's life and growth (Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28-29). Christ disciplines and empowers the Church. He lives within the Church by the faith of the body's members (Ephesians 3:14-21). "The Church which in these last days forgets to whom its obedience is due, which tries to seize power for itself, tries to establish its own sovereignty, to play the master, must finish by enchaining and enslaving itself."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kung, Hans, *The Church*, Trs. by Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p. 102.

The Church today is called to a deeper Christ-consciousness. Such an awareness demands that Christ be trusted as the savior of the Church (Acts 20:28); that Christ be obeyed as the lord of the Church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18,24); and that Christ be relied on as the provider for the Church (John 6:54-56; Ephesians 3:14-21). Only as we yearn for this kind of sensitivity to Christ, responsiveness to Christ, and participation with Christ in God's eternal purpose now unfolding in history will we successfully repudiate false religion, pagan idolatry, and a dead, decaying external form which substitutes itself for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Has the Church a future, a future in this modern world? . . . The fundamental answer has already been given: *if* the Church believes, preaches and lives, convincingly and actively, the message of Jesus Christ, then it has a future in the modern world and in humanity.<sup>2</sup>

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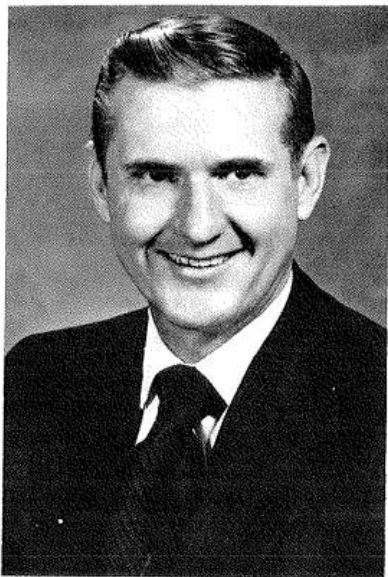
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

## THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

—RICHARD PECTOL

Richard Pectol, Jr., was born November 6, 1931, at Newark Arkansas. He grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, where he attended public schools and Phoenix College. He also attended Texas Wesleyan College, Fort Worth Christian College, and Abilene Christian College. He completed his Master's Degree at A.C.C. writing his thesis on, *The Building Up of the Body of Christ, A Study Involving an Exegesis of Ephesians 4:7-16*.

Pectol has done local preaching in Texas, Montana, and Arizona. He now preaches for the Tenth and Broad Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas. He has preached in meetings in several states, and has worked extensively in youth work and with Bible camps. He taught Bible at Radville Christian College and now serves on the board of the Western Christian Foundation.



His wife, Gay, is also a former student at Abilene Christian College. They have two children, Tommy, 16, and Sylvia, 15.

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What is the church? Who is a member of the church? Is the church a denomination? Is membership in the church essential? How does an individual relate to the church? How is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ related to the corporate re-

lationship within the church? Will the church survive the Twentieth Century? These are questions that we meet almost every day.

On the surface there is sometimes tension between individualism in Christ and the function of the organized congregation. The distinctive spheres for the individual and the church are sometimes heatedly discussed. Many questions concerning this relationship remain unresolved within our brotherhood, but a great deal of this tension grows out of a misconception of the nature and composition of the church. Therefore, one of our most important Biblical concepts is the answer to the question, "What is the church? What does the Bible say about the nature of the church?"

## I. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST

We must begin by noting that the church derives its existence and its reality from Jesus Christ. God has put all things under His feet and made Him in every respect the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23). He is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). This relationship of Jesus and His church is clearly seen in the Ephesian and Colossian epistles, especially in Colossians 1:9-20. Paul says that we are translated out of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). To be in the church is to be in a new creation. Thus we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, and this forgiveness is in Christ, who is the image of God and the firstborn of every creature. It is because He is the firstborn One that we can experience the new birth, attain forgiveness, have a personal relationship with Jesus, and be translated into the Kingdom of Christ, and thus also experience the corporate relationship with Jesus Christ. Attaining a personal

relationship with Jesus and experiencing the corporate fellowship under God's reign are both related to Jesus' activity as the image of God.

By Jesus all things were created (Col. 1:16), and all creation was made by Him and for Him. He was not a bystander at the creation, but an active agent within the Godhead. He maintains this cosmic relationship, and by Him all things consist, i.e., hold together or cohere. Christ sustains and upholds the universe, as He does also the church. He is not an emanation from God, but He is deity become man, the Word made flesh (Cf. John 1:14).

As sustainer and upholder of the universe, He is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18). He is the beginning, the firstborn one from the dead, the preeminent one, in whom God's fulness dwells. As the beginning He is the starting place, the source. The source of all spiritual life within the church is Jesus himself. He is the firstborn One, not simply in the sense that He is the first in point of time, but first in rank, first in importance, the One with the double portion of the inheritance. Thus He truly is the preeminent one in all things, and especially within the church. To be the beginning, the firstborn, the preeminent One shows His deity and His centrality in God's work within the church. Thus it was He who made peace by the blood of His cross and reconciled all things unto Himself (Col. 1:20). Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled unto God in one body, i.e., in the church, by the cross (Eph. 2:16). Thus in the church we have a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another. This relationship is not based merely on our visible relationship, but also upon our direct, personal relationship with the head of the church, Jesus Christ. When Jesus said, "I will build my



church,” He said more than just, “I will establish my religious organization, or my denomination.” As a result of His death and resurrection, those in the church experience a new relationship within the kingdom of God, a relationship growing out of the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God within the body of Christ.

When one is baptized into Christ and into the church he becomes a child of God by faith (Gal. 3:26ff.). He puts on Jesus Christ. No longer is he a Jew nor a Greek, but a part of Christ. He becomes an heir of the promise made to Abraham, because he is now Abraham’s seed (Gal. 3:29), he is an heir of God through Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:7). Acts 2:38-39 shows that those who repent and are baptized become heirs of the promise, and that this promise is open to “as many as the Lord our God shall call,” and Acts 2:47 shows that those who receive this promise are “added together” or as the King James Version says, “added to the church.” For those who do not see the nature of the church, the textual gloss here presents a serious problem. But when you understand the church as the body of Christ or the people of God, you immediately are aware that the gloss is not necessarily doctrinal in nature, for to be “added together” or to be “added to the church” are one and the same thing.

Galatians 3:27-29 shows that those who are added together within the church are united together regardless of race, language, culture, or economics. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Church membership has nothing to do with skin color, language, money, formal education, or

culture. Church membership has to do with a person's relationship with Jesus Christ in faith and baptism and obedience. The church is related to Jesus Christ as His body. Jesus died for all. Any person who comes by faith and is immersed into Jesus, becomes an equal member in the body of Christ. There are no "second class" members in His body. Sometimes we are perfectly willing to accept people who are different as far as baptism is concerned. We are willing to baptize blacks, barefoot students, or dirty bums, and allow them to worship in our buildings. But often we do not really accept them into the fellowship. Note in Acts 11:4 that Peter was called in question, not because he taught and baptized Cornelius, but because he ate with him. Our fellowship in the church must involve men of all races, all social standings and all cultures, because Jesus died for all, and His body can receive any man through His blood.

The very nature of the church is dependent upon the nature of Jesus Christ himself. Just as Christ is God's unique Son (John 3:16), so we are unique people as God's children by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26). Other people can be extremely religious. One can become very pious and devout without Christ or without the church. Many good works can be done by a man out of Christ. But only in Jesus and in His church do we become children of God by faith. Faith is the key to entrance into Jesus' church just as it is the entrance to a personal relationship with Jesus.

As Jesus is the Holy One of God who saw no corruption, we are called to be saints in Christ Jesus (I Cor. 1:2). The church is the set apart people. There is some discussion and argument about the meaning and etymology of the word, *ekklesia*, "church", but God's people are the "called out." They have been called out of darkness into light (I Pet. 2:9),

and thus they are "God's own people," a people especially consecrated for the purpose of showing His praises. In Christ, in the church, those who once were not a people at all become the people of God (I Pet. 2:10).

As Jesus is God's chosen and elect one, the church is a chosen generation (I Pet. 2:4, 9). He is God's beloved Son (Matt. 17:5), and we are the beloved of God when we are in His church (Rom. 1:7). Even the terminology describing membership in the church is directly related to our relationship with Jesus Christ. The church is the people of God, called out of darkness into light (I Pet. 2:9). The church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). The church is not just a religious organization; it is an organism, a functioning, living, dynamic new creation of God in Christ. The church is not merely a denomination; it is the body of Christ.

The body of Christ terminology tells us a lot about the nature of the church. A man's body is inseparable from that man. There has been a lot written and said as to whether the body of Christ terminology is metaphorical or ontological. Of course, this is not the place to enter a technical discussion of the problems to be resolved by this question, but we should note that whether considered metaphorically or ontologically, the body of Christ terminology shows that within the world, Christ and the church are inseparable; and the church is welded together as a body with Jesus Christ as the head.

We recognize a man by his body, i.e., by his physical appearance, his face, his eyes, his hair, etc. While we realize that the body is not the man, we cannot think of a person without that person's physical appearance coming into our mind. When we see an old friend, we say, "My, how you have

changed!” when what we really mean is, “How your body has changed in its physical appearance. Your hair has turned white, or fallen out. Your waist line has increased. Your shoulders are stooped.” We cannot in our mind think of a man and his body as two separate entities. Close your eyes and try to think of a close friend without visualizing that friend’s face. You simply cannot do that! You cannot think of Christ and the church as two separate concepts when you are thinking in terms of salvation, the cross, the gospel, etc. To be in Christ is to be in the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Note the relationship with Jesus and the nature of the church in Col. 2:9-10. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus Christ. All of God’s deity is expressed in this man of Galilee who now sits at the right hand of God. God’s completeness is in Jesus. But so are we made complete in Him. As God’s fulness, He is the head of all principality and power, and thus we are complete in Him. Thus membership within the body of Christ is the experience of being in full harmony with the Godhead. To be in Jesus’ church is to be complete.

## II. THE BODY THAT BUILDS ITSELF UP

As the body of Jesus Christ, the church looks to Jesus Christ as its head. This means that Jesus Christ is the source of life for the church. Christ is head in at least three senses in Paul’s writings. He is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10). He is the head of the body, the church (Eph. 1:22-23). He is the head of every man (I Cor. 11:3). Thus the headship of Christ is an expression of Pauline Christology, and not merely a statement of rulership within the church, although certainly rulership is vital to the concept.

The members of the body of Christ depend upon the head, not only for authority, but for strength and nourish-

ment to function as the body of Christ. At least six times in Ephesians and Colossians, the term head (kephale) is applied to Christ. In each context the headship of Jesus is related to His deity. Thus in every case the very existence of the church depends upon its relationship with Jesus.

Colossians 1:15-20 is a full description of Christ as head of the body, as we have already briefly noted. Christ is the goal or purpose toward which the whole created world is destined to move. Christ is the first principle, He is the firstborn, He is the source and goal of all things, and it is for this reason that He is the ruler of all and head of the church. Christ's headship is connected with His work as a savior, for His cross reconciles all things unto Himself (Col. 1:20). Christ furnishes life and gives purpose to the church. He is the source of life that enables the church to build itself up. The very nature of the church as the body of Christ stresses its relation to Jesus as the sustainer of life, both physical and spiritual.

The church, then, is not a body merely in the sense of a social group or a religious organization. The members of this body have direct relationship with both the authority and the source of life, Jesus, the head of the church. One's active membership within the church sustains a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The building up of the body and growth within the body is dependent upon the relationship of the members of the body with the head and with one another. The Bible shows Christ to be inseparable from His body, the church.

As the body of Christ, the church is to edify itself. Each Christian as a member of the body is responsible for the edification of his neighbor. As members, we are encouraged

by Paul to follow things which enable us to edify one another (Rom. 14:19). Personal ethics and membership in the body of Christ are thus interrelated. A member of the body of Christ always is interested in building up the other members, never in tearing them down. Even in matters of opinion the church members who really understand the nature of the body will not be stubborn nor selfish, but will strive to express his love to edify others. Paul adds further, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Rom. 15:2). A self-willed, belligerent, egotistical, narrow-minded bigot has no place in the church of Jesus Christ. In the church, everyone loves everybody.

One of the purposes of the gift of the apostles, prophets, and evangelists is that they might edify the body of Christ (Eph. 4:13). Paul's discussion of the body in Romans 12 shows that every member has a gift, and that these gifts are not limited to the miraculous works of the Spirit. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:4-5). Every person who is baptized into Christ has a specific office or function to fill. That function may be teaching, it may be in the position of a leader, or it may be the ability to show mercy. But Paul calls each a gift from God. To put it in modern setting, one may be a good song leader, one a preacher, one a personal worker, one a hospital visitor, one a comforter of those in sorrow, one a leader of youth, one a teacher, but all are members of the body of Christ, and even the most insignificant person within the church must function if the church is to be the true body of Christ.

The church is a great corporate body with the power to build itself up. This power comes from the head, Christ. We

are to “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15). As a result of our corporate union with Jesus Christ, we are able to supply one another with spiritual strength, and thus to build up the body in love (Eph. 4:16). The nature of the church is such that every individual member has a specific function in edifying the body of Christ.

For years, we of the churches of Christ have been telling our religious neighbors that there is no clergy-laity distinction within the body of Christ. There is a distinction in the ability and maturity of various members, but no distinction in rank or importance. But our practice has not always been consistent with this Biblical principle. In some cases, we have expected preachers to serve as clerical ministers and pastors in function if not in name. In other cases, preachers have been overly impressed with their own importance to the body of Christ. Sometimes indifferent members have failed to function at the post of duty as a member of the body. Situations often arise to cause well-meaning and zealous brethren to become discouraged in their functions as members of the body. Young people are often frustrated in their willingness to serve by sincere brethren who do not see the vitality of their function. We must stress that the nature of the church is such that every specific and individual member must function as a member of the body. All members are important. Each member must function for the body to be one body. Here the figure of the body of Christ overlaps the concept of the church as a priesthood of all believers.

The word “member” in our day has become watered down by common usage. To be a member of an organization often means little more than the fact that a person has attended a few meetings and paid his entrance fee, and that

his dues are current. But the church is not just a human organization nor a denomination. It is the body of Christ. The New Testament concept of a "member" is that of an organ within a living body, functioning as an integral part of a living organism.

"For as the body is one, and has many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also in Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many" (I Cor. 12:12-14).

At the point of baptism, the Spirit becomes a uniting factor that binds all the members together. Just as there is a life-force, a "breath of life", that binds our physical bodies into one organism, so the Spirit of God takes people of all types, cultures, and backgrounds, and through faith and baptism creates a unity found only in the church, the body of Christ. Thus we are one body.

The church is a living organism, empowered by Christ to edify itself. The body must grow in strength and power and spirituality. It will produce this growth as members of the body recognize the nature of the body of Christ and the nature of their membership within this body, and the connection between the membership and their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

### III. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY

The church is a community composed of those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus, and thus His workmanship (Eph. 2:10). Persons from varied backgrounds, who were all alienated from God, have been brought together. In Christ



Jesus, i.e., within His body or church, we are brought near to God by the blood of Jesus (Eph. 2:13). The church is the community of the cross. We are drawn near, not only to God, but to one another. There is now peace and all human enmity is destroyed in Christ. The peace produced is not only peace with God, but peace with one another. The nature of the church of Jesus Christ does not allow it to be a bickering, backbiting, divisive group. There is peace within the body of Christ (Eph. 2:14). We are "one new man," reconciled within the body of Christ by the cross (Eph. 2:15-16). Even the enmity between Jew and Greek has been destroyed. Any enmity that can divide man can be destroyed in the body of Christ. The cross of Christ is the cure for hatred.

There are those who speak of a "religionless" Christianity. Some feel that the vertical relationship with God is what really matters, not the church. But the reconciliation of the cross takes place within a corporate community, the body of Christ, which we call the church. There can be no union with Jesus Christ without fellowship within the church. We are molded into a community through His cross. That is how all who are in the church, rich and poor, young and old, black and white, are molded into one great temple in which God dwells (Eph. 2:19-22). God's dwelling among us and within us enables us to be built up into this great temple.

We have done a lot of preaching on unity and this unity is surely needed in our time. But sometimes we have stressed doctrinal unity to the neglect of the unity of the fellowship as brethren. It is important that we stand united on the doctrine of baptism, on the name of the church, on the practice of the Lord's Supper, and on all Biblical teaching. We must speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent. But it is also important that we be

united as a corporate community. There must be a unity between young and old, unity between black and white, unity between rich and poor, unity among all believers in Christ Jesus. We have had a lot of preaching, but we often practice very little of the real fellowship of unity of the believers in Christ. Love and faith must bind us together as a great body of believers in Jesus. This is what the church stands for, and its very nature is the basis of this unity.

The church is a community belonging to God, "a peculiar people." As a young boy, the King James expression "peculiar people" used to bother me. How could Christians be "peculiar"? But that is exactly what the church is: "a peculiar people, a people for God's unique purposes." The church is separated from the world. In the technical sense, it is not a part of the Establishment, although it is not necessarily anti-establishment in nature. The church is concerned about the service of God and its community life as a body. While members of the body must not feel they are the elite and above society, they must beware of letting themselves become identified totally with the society establishment. We are to show praises of the one who called us out of darkness (I Pet. 2:9). Christians serve God, not man.

As the new community in Christ, therefore, we come to enjoy a special, unique fellowship in the church of God. This fellowship does not consist of just eating fried chicken together, although social life is a vital part of the fellowship of believers. We are fellow citizens with the saints of God. We are come into the assembly of the firstborn ones whose names are written in heaven. Fellowship involves a community of mission. The Great Commission is to be carried out, not just on an individual basis of personal witness, but as a community enterprise, an enterprise in which every member

of the body is to have a part. It is questionable whether one who is not sharing his faith with others is really in fellowship with the body of Christ, even though others might speak of him as a church member in good standing.

Hebrews 10:23-25 stresses the community of fellowship. The nature of the church is such that each member is to hold fast to his own profession of faith and then to provoke other Christians to love and good works. That is why it is so vital for Christians to worship together. It is not that if one misses a service that his physical absence will send him to torment. It is rather the fact that if he is not in the assembly he cannot function as a member of the body of Christ in exhorting others. To function as a member of the body of Christ, he must be busy provoking his fellow members to do good works, and this can be done only by being in their presence.

Our fellowship with one another and our fellowship with Jesus Christ are truly inseparable (I John 2:3). As we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another within the community of Jesus Christ. I John 1:7 shows fellowship in the community and the continual cleansing in Jesus' blood are one process. Jesus prayed that we might all be one as He and the Father are one (John 17:21). Unity in Christ involves unity within the community, unity within the church, unity that is complete in Christ.

## CONCLUSION

The church is the body of Christ, the reality of Christ as He is manifest in the Twentieth Century and all ages. Jesus went to the cross to purchase the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The church must not degenerate into a denomination. It must not allow itself to become concerned

with incidentals, to be overly solicitous of the Establishment, nor to be buried in the avalanche of progress trying to maintain the status quo. It must not allow itself to become aligned with any special interest group, right or left. Neither can it be identified with the Silent Majority. We must be involved in many things as the church of our Lord, but the involvement must always be an involvement of the fellowship of the body of Christ.

The church must continue to identify itself as the body of Christ, as the new community in Jesus, as the people of God. Its members must serve as God's spokesmen to today's world. This vitality of the church must continue throughout our age in order for Christ to be glorified and served by the present generation. The church will continue to glorify Christ throughout all ages (Eph. 3:20-21), and above all else, churches of Christ and members of this body of Christ must be concerned to preserve and promote the true nature of the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ lives today. He lives in heaven. He lives within His church. He lives in every faithful member of His body. We are dependent upon Jesus for our very existence as His church. As long as we follow Jesus and His Word, we will continue to be the church of Jesus Christ.

## THE IRREPLACEABLE CHURCH

BY TOM GAUMER

Tom W. Gaumer was born in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, October 4, 1934. He was baptized in 1946 at the old Shaw Avenue congregation in East Cleveland. A year following graduation from Cleveland Heights High School in 1952, he entered Florida Christian College and received the A.A. degree from there in 1955. In 1958, he earned his B.A. at Kent State University with a major in Philosophy and a minor in History. Then in 1961, he graduated from the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology with an M.A. in Biblical Studies.

He married Barbara Ann Headley, also a graduate of Florida Christian College, in December, 1956. They have two children: Victoria Suzanne, 6; and Thomas Alexander, 3.

Tom preached for the Superior Avenue Church of Christ in



Cleveland's inner city from February, 1956 through August, 1961. In that same year he and his family moved to Parkersburg, West Virginia, where Tom taught at Ohio Valley College through the spring of 1964. Also, while living in Parkersburg, he served the church at Veto, Ohio, 1961-1963; and the North End Church of Christ, 1963-1966. Beginning in the fall of 1966, he assumed duties as an instructor in the Preston Road School of Preaching, Dallas, Texas, where he has remained until the present.

In addition to filling up his summers with evangelistic

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The church is viewed from at least two major stand-points in the New Testament. When distinguished as the community of all believers of all times and places (Matthew 16:18), it is customary to speak of "the invisible church," or "the church universal." On the other hand, reference to a congregation of a particular time and geographical area (Matthew 18:17; I Corinthians 1:2), is conventionally treated as an example of "the visible church," or "the local church." While this distinction is often useful, it must be remembered that in reality we are speaking of only one church, so that the church local is inseparable from the church universal. In God's scheme of things both are irreplaceable.

The modern climate of theological opinion offers a wide spectrum of diverse opinions concerning the role and the future of the church. While many theologians fear the church will eventually become utterly extinct if certain drastic changes are not forthcoming soon, most deem essential the preservation of the church in some universal sense at least. There are those who maintain that the organized, local church (denominationalism) is a hindrance to modern man, and should either be radically reshaped or eliminated altogether. In any case, the "church" is under attack in our day as part of the much criticized "establishment"; and the churches of Christ, unable to exist in isolation from the

society engulfing them, are feeling the disruptive effects of the assault.

Belief that the true church of our Lord is irreplaceable is not predicated upon human wisdom, but is founded upon the teaching of God's word. In the first place, it is stated in Ephesians 3:11, that the church was "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is evident, therefore, that the church was an integral part of God's scheme of things from eternity. Furthermore, the church was "purposed in Christ Jesus," in whom all things are summed up (Ephesians 1:10), and "in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (Colossians 2:3; I Corinthians 1:24). The connection of these latter two passages with the church is brought out in Ephesians 3:10 which teaches that the church is the expression of "the manifold wisdom of God." Christ as the wisdom of God is exhibited through the church's proclamation of the gospel. Thus the truth begins to emerge that Christ and his church are inseparable in God's scheme of redemption. This is further verified by the fact that the church is plainly called "the body of Christ" in Ephesians 1:22, 23 (Cf. 5:23; Colossians 1:18). In the light of these scriptural facts, it is hardly possible to think of the church either as an after-thought on God's part or as only a temporary community. Also, if at least basically equating the church with the kingdom is justifiable, then the church is delivered up to the Father in the end (I Corinthians 15:24), to enjoy its eternal habitation in the "new heavens and earth" as the "new Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:2; Cf. Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22).

Secondly, the church is the body of the saved (Ephesians (5:23). It is where God's grace and man's faith meet to

produce salvation (Ephesians 2:8). It is where men are reconciled to each other and to God—where the cross and conversion are united (Ephesians 2:16). The church does not save souls; only Jesus her head possesses this power. But God has ordained that the church comprise the redeemed (Acts 2:47, Hebrews 12:23). Christ is the savior of the body. Salvation, which is the real essence and purpose of the gospel, is the very reason for the existence of the church. Irreplaceability is thus seen to be inherent in the very nature of the church as purposed by God. This truth does not apply merely to the church viewed as the universal body of believers, but also to the church as a visible, organized “institution” in its various local manifestations. God just as surely ordained the existence of the local church as he did the universal. Christ assumed there would be a “visible church” (Matthew 18:17, 20), and Paul established congregations of God’s people wherever he laboured (Acts 14:23; Cf. II Corinthians 11:28). Moreover, these congregations met together frequently as a means of maintaining the life of the church (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 14:23; 16:1, 2). Failure to assemble constituted grounds for stern admonition (Hebrews 10:25).

The importance of the visible church in God’s plan of salvation is even more evident in a third consideration which helps establish the irreplaceable nature of the church. It is the fact that the church is the agency of the proclamation of the gospel. In alluding to this point earlier, reference was made to Ephesians 3:10. Verses 8 and 9 of this passage make it clear that Paul considered his preaching “unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and his making “all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God,” as the actual procedure of the church in carrying out its mission. The effect is so far-reaching and penetrating that God’s wisdom is pictured as being made



known even to the invisible forces of evil that lie behind the overt acts of evil men, namely, “the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places” (verse 10). The church is thus a “saving institution” even from the standpoint of its role as the bearer of the message of salvation. As suggested above, this is accomplished by preaching Christ, the wisdom of God. When the local church does this faithfully, then the church is truly fulfilling its function as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3:15). This mission makes it a divine, irreplaceable enterprise.

A final evidence that the church is indispensable is its function for the community of the saved. The church is not only the light of the world in the sense that it actively proclaims the good news of salvation, but also in the sense that it holds “forth the word of life” (that is, embodies the principles of Christ), “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Philippians 2:15,16). Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matthew 9:13). The church is composed of sinners. True they differ from those of the world because they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Thus sin no longer has dominion over them (Romans 6:14). But they still struggle against the flesh as they seek to live after the Spirit (Romans 8:12,13). In Christ they have a new beginning, for, “if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature” (II Corinthians 5:17). Yet they have been “created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10). Therefore, they are expected to, and they desire to grow. They long as newborn babes for spiritual milk that is without guile, that they may grow thereby unto salvation (I Peter 2:2). They seek to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18). As they strive to walk by the Spirit they determine to evidence the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). The goal of Paul’s preaching was to

“present every man perfect in Christ” (Colossians 1:28). Ephesians 4:11-16 presents a picture of rare beauty as it describes the Christian’s growth toward perfection or maturity with Jesus himself as the standard:

And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

Love is the key, for it “is the bond of perfectness” (Colossians 3:14). Love ties all the other Christian graces together and gives them meaning. When love dominates, Christian maturity is being achieved. Then with Paul we may say, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). This is the real beauty of the church: it is a community of sinners striving upward to be like Christ.

From this standpoint, the church is as irreplaceable as the physical world is during this present life. Just as truly as God’s kingdom of nature is vital to the growth, health and welfare of the outward man; so his spiritual kingdom, the church, is crucial for the spiritual growth of the inward man. God set it up in this way. Life in the church is governed by

principles every bit as inviolate as those which govern our physical existence. One can no more eliminate the church if he is to attain the true life in Christ and be saved, than he can eliminate the necessities for physical life and survive. God designed the church for its functions. There are no substitutes; there is no survival without it.

The necessity of the church is presupposed by so many other subjects treated in the pages of the New Testament that the involved picture they present defies any easy analysis. Consideration of even some of them is precluded by the length of this study. However, as one example, the whole doctrine of Jesus dying for the church, giving himself up for it (Ephesians 5:25), paying the price of his blood for it (Acts 20:28), is not consistent with a replaceable church. To believe that the great emphasis which the New Testament places on Jesus' self-humiliation and sacrifice concerns only a temporary, non-essential community of believers stretches one's credulity to the breaking point. The same may be said of the biblical doctrine of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18-21) which is accomplished in the one body, the church, through the cross (Ephesians 2:16). A doctrine so fundamental to salvation, one which bridges the gap separating men from God because of sin (Isaiah 59:1,2), can scarcely yield the idea of an expendable church. It may be said that every fundamental doctrine of our faith anticipates an irreplaceable church.

It was observed earlier that the churches of Christ are feeling the impact of modern theological opinion, and in no area of discussion is it more evident than in that of the nature and role of the church in the twentieth century. Out of this area of discussion one line of thought is being persistently urged which has captured the imagination of the public;

namely, that the church must be reshaped to meet the needs of modern man. Some, of course, would eliminate the organized church altogether. Others would drastically alter its "traditional forms." Still others are more cautious, but still convinced there must be changes. Most of the debate, quite naturally, concerns the denominational world, but the churches of Christ have not succeeded in escaping the effects of this thinking. There is a definite element within the brotherhood that is articulating the conclusions of some of the leading theologians of this century, although often in modified forms and with a restraint more in keeping with the conservatism of the churches of Christ. Nevertheless, there is a real danger. In spite of the fact that modern theology does have much to offer that is good and constructive, many of its basic assumptions and attitudes, if developed to the fullest by a majority of our brethren, would destroy the plea for the restoration of New Testament Christianity in our day. Already the church is threatened with what may prove to be irreparable harm. Therefore, it is appropriate that at least a brief notice be given to a few of these dangerous trends of thought as they have developed in the hands of some of the celebrated theologians of our time.

Although Dietrich Bonhoeffer was never able to develop a complete system of thought, his extant writings contain several rather suggestive, novel lines of investigation which others have attempted to enlarge upon. Especially has his mature thought reflected in *Letters and Papers from Prison* exercised a powerful influence on modern theology. Because his ideas are undeveloped, it is not always easy to be certain of what he meant, or how far he intended to carry out concepts which appear only in germ form in his letters. Still the dangerous trends are evident. His repeated reference to "man come of age," together with the insistence that man

has learned to solve most of his problems without God, and that God "allows himself to be edged out of the world and on to the cross," have clearly inspired the trend toward an overbalanced emphasis on the humanity of Jesus and the secularization of the church so prominent today. Bonhoeffer predicted a changed church with a "new language" within a generation, which he described as "the Church's conversion and purgation."<sup>1</sup> He noted the fact that the church was having little effect on the masses, due to its concentrating its ministry on the upper and lower middle classes.<sup>2</sup> He saw the traditional, organized church disappearing with the onslaught of science as it answers more and more of the problems for which only the church provided answers previously. If all questions are ultimately answered by science, God, the pastor and the churches will eventually vanish.<sup>3</sup> Bonhoeffer's final position seems obscure to many, but he did believe the church should exist for humanity, which means it should assume its role in the social life of the world.<sup>4</sup> This is obviously in the direction of secularizing the church. Since Bonhoeffer is popular with the young and especially with some young preachers, his dissatisfactions with the "traditional church" are being voiced within the ranks of the churches of Christ with an ever growing frequency.

Paul Tillich, with his doctrine of God is in the same

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<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Paperbacks Edition. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195, 196.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

direction as Bonhoeffer. God is defined as the "Ground of Being," which in the final analysis is something akin to pantheism, where God is the immanent power permeating the universe, or "the structure of all being." As early as *The Shaking of the Foundations* he predicts that we may have to abandon the term "God"<sup>5</sup> in order to escape the traditional concept of God. His link in the chain that led to the "God is dead" theology is obvious. With his doctrine of "New Being" he placed a pronounced emphasis on the person and humanity of Jesus to the neglect of the organized church. He maintained that Christ came to free us from "religion."<sup>6</sup> In his *Systematic Theology*, he denies that the Spiritual Community composed of those who have their New Being centered in Christ is to be identified with the Christian churches. The Church is engrossed too much with matters of form and ritual, and only justifies its existence to the extent it reflects the Spiritual Community.<sup>7</sup>

The implications of the theologies of Bonhoeffer and Tillich are well summarized for the layman by John A. T. Robinson in his best seller, *Honest to God*. He also draws heavily on Rudolf Bultmann, who, though more a biblical scholar rather than a theologian, contributes to the attack on the "traditional church" through his famous "demythologizing" of the New Testament. The church in Bultmann's view

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963). See especially pages 152-155, 182ff.

becomes an "eschatalogical community," a complicated view not easily grasped, but which also tends to play down the organizational aspect of the church and to eliminate all traditional forms offensive to modern man. Robinson's conclusions call for a revolution within the churches, and sees their survival only if they enter into the secular arena.<sup>8</sup> This requires stripping the Christian religion and the church of outdated concepts and forms not palatable to the taste of modern, secular society. Naturally, all supernatural occurrences recorded in connection with the church must be considered other than as literally or historically true.

The natural, ultimate outgrowth of this theological perspective was the radical theology of Paul van Buren, William Hamilton and Thomas Altizer. With van Buren's *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, the church for all practical purposes merges with secular society. There are no conversions, no effort to make others Christians.<sup>9</sup> What Bultmann did with his "demythologizing," van Buren accomplished even further with his "linguistic analysis." All theological or biblical terms and concepts should be eliminated if they have no content that is meaningful to modern man. Christianity is stripped of all that is considered displeasing to the twentieth century man "come of age." Essentially the same effect is what you end up with in Harvey Cox's much read *The Secular City* (although he seeks to be more loyal to biblical

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<sup>8</sup> John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 139.

<sup>9</sup> Paul M. van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), pp. 90-92.

concepts). This city is really the church become secular in order to serve society. The concept is carried so far in the radical theology of Hamilton and Altizer that they declare the "death of God." Religion is gone, the church is gone, and God is gone. All that remains is a secular community and a totally human Jesus symbolizing the ideals of modern secular man.<sup>10</sup>

Even Karl Barth, although evidently much more orthodox and not to be classed with the group of theologians we have already noticed, does not escape at least an indirect minimizing of the organizational church. His preoccupation with Christology results in the church's role being limited almost exclusively to proclaiming the message of Christ as witnessed by the Scriptures. His influence has definitely contributed to the oft repeated charge of too much "Church-anity" and not enough "Christianity." His prestige is also behind the preference of some for "the man" over "the plan." It is, furthermore, significant that Barth was the first theologian of stature in this century to view the visible church as composed of "justified sinners," and as burdened with the fleshly sins and infirmities common to all earthly institutions of its day. Nevertheless, he was far from repudiating the essentiality of it.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966). See especially pages 3-21, 87-93.

<sup>11</sup> Since Barth desired that his thought be judged by his *Church Dogmatics*, his view of the church is best seen in Vol. I, Part II, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956).



When the "death of God theology" seemed to be running its course, there began to emerge a "theology of hope," with Wolfhart Pannenberg as its chief voice. It seemed at first there was a return to orthodoxy when he insisted the resurrection was an actual, historical event. But the expectation was short-lived. His "theology of hope" is actually a "theology of the future." This futurity principle colors all of his thought, including that concerning the church. Pannenberg distinguishes sharply between the Church and the Kingdom of God. Indeed, the Kingdom can be conceived of without a church.<sup>12</sup> He makes it quite clear that the church is not eternal.<sup>13</sup> The church's reason for existence is to function in a preliminary capacity. It is necessary until society reaches the point where its social structures are adequate for the realization of what amounts to a type of ideal community in which justice and love reign. This is the Kingdom of God. It is future, but not other-worldly. It is secular in nature, yet it is established by an act of God not by man. The church's function is to stir men's imaginations and aspirations for the coming of this Kingdom. In order to do this effectively it must be restructured. Authoritarianism, traditionalism and dogmatism must be put in the past and denominational lines broken. The church must be willing to accept a unity that allows different, even contradictory, positions on doctrinal matters.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>14</sup> See *op. cit.*, the chapter entitled, "The Kingdom of God and the Church." pp. 72-101.

Pannenberg's thought turns out to be an independent tributary that flows only too easily into the river of secular Christianity.

The major danger in these modern theologies for the churches of Christ lies in the persistent claim that the church is outmoded. Even if the language, ritual and doctrine be truly biblical, they must be either radically changed or abandoned altogether if the church is to survive in and serve the twentieth century. Hence, even some of our own brethren, in the name of altering the face of the church, are willing to compromise certain biblical doctrines and practices in order to attain a wider fellowship and a greater outreach to humanity. Their good intentions we do not question, but the source of their presuppositions and influence we do. When once one starts down this road, where is the logical stopping place that breaks off short of abandoning the church to either secularism or to some form of community no longer the distinctive church of the New Testament?

Still there is the other side of the coin too. Influences are always there, but they only take hold when there is dissatisfaction. It would be a mistake to ignore all dissatisfaction within the church as unjustified. The ferment has reached a high pitch, and we do well to re-examine ourselves in the light of God's word (II Corinthians 13:5). It is imperative that the lines of communication be left open, and that we entertain the possibility that changes might need to be made, although, of course, not according to the unscriptural approach of modern theology. For example, is the charge that in some cases we have confused our own traditions with a "thus saith the Lord" valid? We need to remain open to constructive criticism, especially when it comes from our own brethren. Any changes proposed should

be first within scriptural bounds, secondly, meaningful. Changes which are adopted simply for novelty or to make us appear different are useless. Frankly, we do not anticipate that fidelity to these two norms will result in any substantial renovation of the churches of Christ as we have known them. The need for more meaningful and inspiring worship services, and for greater spirituality among members of the church generally may be just observations. However, these are problems that have always been with the church, and we deny they are being ignored for the most part, or have ever been for that matter. Nevertheless, some of the solutions being proposed currently are in the wrong direction. Possession of supposed charismatic gifts, private services in the home with dimmed lights and handholding, emphasis on witnessing personal experiences, and such like, do not constitute a satisfactory answer. Some are unscriptural, others tend toward unguided emotionalism and exclusiveness, and all are divisive. The real answer to spirituality is as old as the New Testament. It requires a deeper dedication to Christ, being instant in prayer, and a sincere desire to have Christ formed within us (Galatians 4:19).

No matter what direction individual congregations may be led, let them be certain that the source of their influences and persuasions come from God's word and not man's. One thing is certain: any persuasion that does not recognize that the church is irreplaceable, is from man.

## THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH

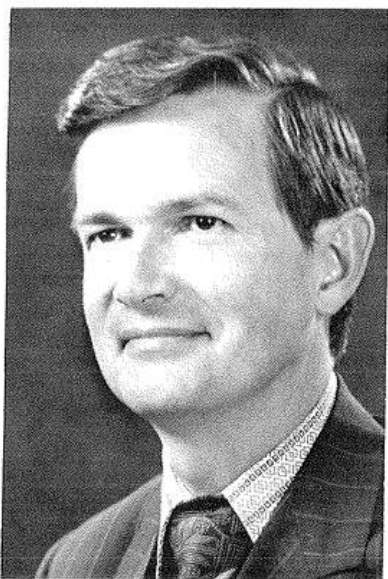
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Family: Married to the former Helen Royalty of Louisville, Kentucky, now a teacher at Germantown, Tennessee, Elementary School; two sons: Patrick, thirteen; Jeffrey, eleven.

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Coleridge once described Ephesians as “one of the divinest compositions of man.” The central theme of Ephesians is unity—a kind of unity which is still the center of man’s dreams and longings. Christendom is today being forced to consider the possibility of unity by the rival gospels which promise men fellowship with one another, and which sometimes produce a kind of fellowship. Communism, for example, appears to be good news to a world which is tired of loneliness and strict individualism. The attractiveness of such rival religions often lies in their promise of unity, which meets a desperate need men sense. At the same time, the Gospel’s proclamation of unity in Christ is neglected by those who announce themselves His followers, so that the Gospel is continually sinned against because of disunity.

It is often suggested that Ephesians was either a circular letter to be sent to a group of churches or a general letter for all Christian readers. Goodspeed conjectured that it may have been intended to serve as an introduction to a collection of Paul’s epistles. Others have speculated that it was written as a circular letter to the churches in Asia Minor, with the address blank, to be filled in by Tychicus before delivery to an individual congregation. One reason for these suggestions is that the words, “who are at Ephesus,” are missing from the opening lines of some of our oldest manuscripts. Too, Paul’s

common references to local people and particular situations, sometimes difficult as in Galatians, and sometimes encouraging as in Philippians, are largely missing from Ephesians.

Ephesians is a letter only in its form. While we begin letters, "Dear So & So," letters in the New Testament period began, "A to B, Greeting," often followed by a prayer for the reader's health. The substance of Ephesians is a treatise on the significance of Christ and the church in relation to God's plan for the universe, followed by instruction and exhortation on the kind of life which becomes those who are called into God's service as members of the church.

The letter thus falls into two principal divisions: chapters 1-3 are doctrinal, while chapters 4-6 apply this doctrine to the life of the Christian in the world. The first half of the book is concerned with the status of the redeemed community. There is great emphasis on the new birth: Christians are chosen for holiness (1:4), destined to adoption (1:5), redeemed and forgiven (1:7), and sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13). Now they need "wisdom and revelation" (1:17) so that they may more fully grasp the divine purpose and know the "exceeding greatness of His power" which he showed in the resurrection, ascension and present rule of Christ. The great themes of salvation continue to appear in chapters 2 and 3: readers have been made alive (2:1), saved (2:8), newly created in Christ (2:10). Though they were Gentiles and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, they have been "made nigh by the blood." The doctrinal section closes with a great prayer that the readers might be strengthened by God's Spirit in the inner man and that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith (3:14-19).

In the second part of the letter, Paul turns with a

“therefore” to sketch out what each Christian must be if the church is to carry out her part in the purpose of God. Christian morality is a “therefore” morality—it is a goodness which is lived out of thanksgiving. In a world of discord, where nation is set against nation, man against man, class against class, and where there is an unceasing warfare within man himself, God desires to achieve a sacred oneness in and through Christ. Paul described the necessary character of the Christian for God’s reconciling work to be done through him in what is commonly called the “Christian walk” in Ephesians.

He then turned to the Christian household with its relationships, and concluded the letter with a description of the fighting saint. We are not engaged in a human battle where man slaughters man but in a cosmic warfare where every evil scheme will be used against us. Yet this deadly combat is more than a duel; we need the whole army and armor of God in fighting it, just as surely as any Roman soldier who went forth to face the barbarian hordes needed his armor and his fellow-soldiers.

*I. God’s Purpose to Redeem and Unite Men: (1:1-14)*

The first chapter of Ephesians provides a beautiful insight into the real message of the church, particularly in verse 10, in which Paul speaks of God’s “plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth.” The remainder of the letter attempts to show *how* God plans to “unite all things in Christ.” The opening chapter affirms God’s plan, His message to men: that all divisions between man and God, and between men and men, should be cemented through Jesus Christ.

The doctrinal portion of Ephesians is cast largely in the

form of a prayer. The opening salutation is followed by a hymn of adoration to God which recounts the spiritual blessing He bestows in Christ (1:3-14). This "hymn" is followed by a prayer for the readers' spiritual enlightenment—a prayer that we may be able to understand this revelation. We are called on to appreciate the mighty acts of God in Christ as a manifestation of His saving and uniting power. The specific acts mentioned are the raising and exaltation of Christ—acts which are paralleled in our own experience, in that we are raised up from our death of sin and exalted to share the heavenly life of Jesus Christ (2:1-10).

Paul's description of God's plan "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth," was startling. This man claims to know the ultimate purpose of God, and he asserts that this purpose is nothing less than the uniting of the universe in Christ. Who would claim to understand what God has been doing through the centuries? Who understands what God wants of men? Without hesitation, Paul asserts that God wants the unity of all things in Christ!

This announcement would have been as amazing in Paul's world situation as it is in ours. The early Christians lived in a divided, sensuous, religiously restless world. Outwardly men appeared to be unified under Rome, but inwardly the empire was fragmented nationally, culturally and religiously. Great philosophers had emptied the Greek world of its gods by stirring man's own conscience against the immorality of the mythological deities. Wars, rivalries and enmities proved the outward political unity of the day was unreal as well. Our world and national situation is not terribly different today; what seems to be unity is often limited to small areas and few people, while national happiness is crippled by divisions and disunity continues to



be the curse of mankind as it has since the beginning of history.

Paul also knew the effect of sin as he announced the need for unity. In the epistle, he cited a number of specific evils, which are as familiar to us as they were to him. Sin makes the problem of disunity even more serious and the need for unity imperative. The greatest disaster for the early church was division. Christians must live among those who "are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart" (4:18). Men have become callous, have given themselves to licentiousness, and have become greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness (4:19).

We like to think men are taken by surprise when they are seduced to do evil, that they do not desire to be wicked, and that they attempt to resist temptation. The picture Paul paints is different; the Ephesians were former pagans who had been eager to do wrong. Now that they had been converted, the pressures of the old life sometimes became quite strong. Paul warned against falsehood, anger, theft, laziness, evil talk, bitterness, wrath, clamor, slander, immorality, and drunkenness. He called upon parents to avoid overbearing traits, children to be obedient, masters to avoid harshness and slaves to serve with good will.

Unity was disrupted not only by the restlessness and sinfulness of man, but by domestic problems as well. Unkind remarks passed between husbands and wives. Wives, who had been liberated by Christ, may have felt unduly restricted by domestic customs. Children of Christian parents may have observed the greater freedom of children of non-Christian parents. Masters continued to be severe with slaves and slaves

continued to be time-servers after their conversion. When anyone viewed such an unattractive display, he would probably have decided that the unity which was so desperately needed in Christ could never come to pass. Yet Paul affirmed the divine message for the ages: the unity of all things in Christ.

The warmth of Paul's appeal appears as he notes that God "chose" us, "destined" us before the foundation of the world to be His sons. Why did God choose *us*? Why did he choose the Jews? Why should He not have chosen the civilized Egyptians or the brilliant Greeks? Why has He chosen you and me to be Christians today when there may be far more worthy men and women in pagan lands who have never heard of Christ? When we try to penetrate the mystery of these questions, we must avoid casting Paul's thought into later molds. Paul did not teach a double predestination in which God chose a few for heaven and the rest for hell regardless of human character or response. He was convinced that God's grace was not an accidental affair in his life, but while he wrote of God's choice, he no less firmly believed in human responsibility. He often warned that man may fall from the place of grace to which God has elected him.

Paul's hymn of adoration then turned to "his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved," which had made redemption real. Grace is such an overworked term today that we may not appreciate it until we recall the possibility of dis-grace, or of God's wrath. His grace represents a very costly giving. It makes possible His forgiving us, which should result in our thanksgiving to Him. A marriage partner, sinned against, learns the costliness of such forgiveness. One must live with the memory of shame, the tragedy of a broken vow, and carry a broken heart. Christ

shared our shame, yet without the surrender of His own purity, to make God's grace and forgiveness real.

Paul concluded his introductory paragraph with a reference to our being sealed "with the promised Holy Spirit," which he called the "guarantee" or earnest of our inheritance until we fully acquire the promise of eternal life.

## *II. This Unity and Redemption are in Christ: (1:15-23)*

Following his adoration of God for what He has done in Christ and the grandeur of His purpose to unite all things in Christ, Paul prayed that the eyes of his readers' hearts might be enlightened so that we might know what God has "accomplished in Christ" (1:18-20). We tend to face problems and analyze life in terms of the present only, and of our own small worlds. Even here we do not see God's purpose any more than beginning to be fulfilled, and may have serious doubts about the possibility of all things being united in Christ. Paul takes a cosmic view and speaks of all things "in heaven and on earth" being united in Christ, which is far more difficult than uniting the immediate circle in which our lives move.

Paul was assured of the "immeasurable greatness of the power" in Christ. Why the power of Christ? Today Jesus may seem to be an ancient carpenter who, though He evidenced remarkable nobility of life and teaching, was crucified as a traitor in an empire that has now vanished. Suppose someone should announce to the United Nations during a tense moment, "The unity we seek is to be achieved by Jesus Christ through His cross." How far do you suppose his message would get? Yet this is the central message of Ephesians. God is uniting men in the church.

When we face great problems, we tend to deal with the earthly life and ministry of Jesus, and to point men back to His teachings and example. The early church, as reflected in the epistles, seems to have pointed back less to the sermon on the mount, His parables and miracles, and to have pointed more to the *present* power of the ascended Christ who now reigns. There is a vivid realization of His working *now*. He had once been a great teacher and companion, He had once hung on a cross, but now He has ascended to God's right hand. Now He is the ruler of the universe! Hence Ephesians has been called "the epistle of the ascension" because it is His great power at God's right hand, which we cannot fully comprehend, which is able to reconcile men to God and to one another.

Paul then notes that this reconciliation takes place in His body, the church, which is "the fullness of him who fills all in all." Here the church senses its message and its mission. It is not an end within itself; it is rather a means to God's end of bringing men into unity in Christ.

There is a real possibility that we may exalt the church as an institution to a position of equality with Christ, since it is "the fullness of him who fills all in all." The church is often called an extension of His incarnation, and one hears of vicars of Christ on earth. This is presumptuous. The incarnation of Christ was sinless; the church is not sinless. And while we seek to carry on the fullness of His work in the world, He is "head over all things for the church," and the church is included under His dominion.

The church is His body but it may lack life within. It is not called to privilege but to service. Like the people John

the Baptizer addressed, the church must bring forth fruits rather than relying on her ancestry.

The glory of the church is, however, *real*—it is His body in the world. It is the Kingdom of God which was at hand when He announced it; it is a colony of heaven on earth. It has its urgent role. It is the place where God unites men according to His purpose. This is the message of the church; she does not glorify herself but rather she glorifies her Lord and declares God's "plan . . . to unite all things in Christ" (1:10).

### Conclusion

How did Paul know so vividly Christ as the source of unity? He had experienced the unifying power of Christ in his own life. As a religious zealot he had haunted and abused Christians. But his torn life had found unity and victory in Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:25). He now sought to become all things to all men, to see others as those for whom Christ died, to be controlled by the love of Christ. He now possessed that peace which passes understanding. He exhibited the power of Christ in his life and work.

It may be that neither the unity of men with one another nor their reconciliation to God is either observable or foreseeable on any massive scale. But the inner unity, the peace of soul which we have found in Christ, *is* real now. It is this oneness with oneself, this oneness with God, which has arrived. And it is in Christ and through His blood that God unites men within their own souls, with one another and with Himself! Paul prayed that each reader who had known the joy of this unity might come into a fuller realization of God's message for men: that He desires to unite all things in his Son.

## THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

### GOTTFRIED REICHEL

*Home Congregation:* Munich-Laim, Germany. *Birth:* Saxony, Germany, March 9, 1930. *Baptized:* May 2, 1948. *Wife:* Hannelore Pusch; *Married:* December 28, 1954; *Children:* Matthias, 15, Michael, 14, Katharina, 13, Elisabeth, 11.

*Began Preaching:* Munich, Germany, August 1948.

*Training:* Kolleg der Gemeinde Christi; Frankfurt, Germany; Harding College, B.A.

*Churches Served:* Heppenheim, Germany, 1950-51; Munich-Laim, 1953-1968; since 1965 regular speaker on "World Radio Germany", a weekly broadcast aired over Radio Luxemburg. Since its beginning almost 12,000 pieces of mail have been received from 28 different



nations, 8 of which are located behind the Iron Curtain. Since December, 1968, gives full-time to radio preaching, besides holding gospel meetings, publishing work, and other activities connected with the follow-up work of the radio ministry. Since May, 1970, the radio work was extended through a Tape Mission offering radio sermons on small tapes and cassettes to be played in homes and hospitals. Outlets exist in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Brother Bob Hare is using them among German speaking people behind the Iron Curtain.

*Papers:* Der Christ im 20. Jahr-

hundert (Twentieth Century Christian in German), Twentieth Century Christian, Power for Today.

*Books:* Editor of *Der Herold*, published for use among churches in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

*Other Facts:* Was refugee from Russian Zone. American soldiers converted him. Father (former Elder of Lutheran church), mother and sister have since been baptized. Reiner Kallus, who later began preaching and 3 other members of his family were contacted through him. Meetings: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Finland and U.S.A.

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In recent months it has been my lot to consult the different dictionaries a great deal more than when working among my own people in Germany. When endeavoring to teach in a foreign language one often runs across unfamiliar words or expressions the meaning of which one is uncertain. While looking them up in the dictionary is rather time consuming, the results are often rewarding because new insight into the meaning of words is gained. When I was asked to speak on the topic, **THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**, I found the following definition for the word **MISSION**: "The business with which an agent is charged." It struck me that the term Mission is a very fitting one to be associated with the church. Christ's church is charged to be in business as an agent. Now what is the responsibility of an agent? It is to "act on behalf of another." The church can only claim to be Christ's if she acts on her Lord's behalf.

If we, therefore, discuss the **MISSION** of the church, we must first ask: What was Christ's mission? When questioned by Pilate whether he was a king, Jesus announced when he

was on earth: "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). Christ's being born and his coming into the world involved, as John states so impressively: "... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we behold His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). What I would like to emphasize, in order to fulfill his mission the eternal and preexistent Son of God took on human flesh, or as the Hebrew letter expresses it: "A body Thou hast prepared for Me ... to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:5, 7). Without this human body the son of man and the son of God could not have accomplished his atoning mission on earth. He was to bear witness to the truth concerning the invisible God, whom no man has seen. While dwelling in the flesh, Christ has explained God to his disciples, as John states (John 1:18). Jesus' reply to the request of the Apostle Philip, "Lord, show us the Father ..." was "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:8, 9). The incarnate Christ is God's most perfect revelation to man.

In his body Jesus also exemplified what true humanity is according to God's standard. He could rightfully say: "I always do the things that are pleasing to God" (John 8:29). He was able to challenge his enemies: "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" (John 8:46). By being what he was he exposed man's sinfulness, his love for darkness. Being committed to bear witness to the truth he stated very clearly that sinful man lives under the "wrath of God" (John 3:36), that he shall die in his sins (John 8:24), meaning eternal separation from life, from God. There would be no hope for us, if this had been all the truth Christ came to reveal. He not



only assures us of God's love in spite of our sin, but also presents himself as "the living bread that came down out of heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh" (John 6:51). Here again his body's part in bridging the gap between God and lost mankind is apparent. When Christians partake of the Lord's Supper they proclaim his body "was given for us" (Luke 22:19) and that the blood of this body was "shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sin" (Matthew 26:28). Shortly before his body ceased to breathe its last breath on the cross, Jesus was able to cry in relief, "It is finished!" Because he accomplished to the last, with the body God prepared for him, the Father's will, he in truth can claim: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

As the risen, ascended and exalted Lord, divine wisdom has willed that Christ's atoning mission should be continued through another type of body, Christ's church. Through this, his body, the heavenly head chooses to complete the redemptive work he began on earth. By inspiration Paul calls this body of believers the fulness of him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:22, 23). As Christ used his earthly body to do God's will, so the church has the holy responsibility to carry on his mission of salvation in a dark world of conflict. Keeping the Lord's mission in mind, "I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth," it certainly is very fitting that Paul portrays the "church of the living God," as "the pillar and support of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). No doubt in an age in which more and more absolute guidelines for life are questioned, some members of the church may be tempted to adapt the relativism of Pontius Pilate by asking "What is truth?" Brethren, let us never forget Christ came to bear witness to *the* truth, not just some truth or a truth

among others. That's why he stated in intolerant plainness "I am the truth!"

There are many in our day, who would agree that Christ, the Son of God, is the personified truth. But can the church really be considered "the pillar and support of the truth?" Are not her members rather limited and fallible beings? Well, we need to see that the truth with which the church is endowed comes from her heavenly head. Before leaving this earth Christ promised his apostles who had been with him "from the beginning" (John 15:27), that they would be given the Spirit of truth, to guide them "into all the truth" (John 16:13), to teach them "all things" and further bring to "their remembrance" all that he said to them (John 14:26). With the coming of the Spirit of Truth on the Day of Pentecost the apostles were equipped to be Christ's witnesses. Through the inspired "apostles' teaching" Jesus guided his body of believers in its divine mission. Through "their word" (John 17:20) we also may come to faith in him. Yes, his promise is also for us: "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). Let us note in this context that it is impossible to separate the person of Christ, who is the truth, from his word, which alone can open to us the gate to the liberating truth of the son of God. Alone the son can make us free, if we are willing to surrender to his word and to continue in it.

In the light of these divine truths the plea of Churches of Christ to endeavor to restore New Testament Christianity is a MUST. If we have outgrown our plea, as some among us have remarked, then we really don't have any right to exist, and are only a copy of some of the conservative denominations and in general a pretty bad copy at that. The reason we could

only be a bad copy is the fact that our original goal to restore New Testament Christianity, of basing our faith on the Bible alone, keeps us from making as far reaching compromises as modern man seems to desire and the denominational world in general is more ready to offer.

The Lord's church in our age and in ages to come can only fulfill her divine mission, if she is the pillar of truth, in proclaiming fearlessly to the world "the message of truth, the gospel" (Ephesians 1:13). She must tell the good news of God's love, grace and compassion for lost mankind, prompting him to "give His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). She must tirelessly pronounce the love of Jesus who "died for our sins . . . , was buried and was raised on the third day" (I Corinthians 15:3, 4). She must firmly believe that this message of truth "Is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes . . ." (Romans 1:16). Her Lord's command: "Go into *all* the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15) can, therefore, never be a sideline affair (or to use a college term: an Extracurricular Activity). As the pillar of truth she cannot afford to be seen in only a few areas of the world, but must shun no effort and sacrifice to share Christ with people of all nations.

In speaking of the Gospel of Christ we so far have mentioned divine love, grace, compassion and salvation. But is this really the whole truth concerning the message of Christ? Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, recognized it as part of his responsibility when preaching the gospel "to bring about the obedience of faith among all . . . for His name's sake" (Romans 1:5). The Hebrew letter underlines the same truth: "He—Christ—became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9). If the church of

our Lord Jesus Christ is to continue to be “the pillar of truth” she must also stress that no one who is unwilling to surrender to him in complete trust and obedience can taste salvation through Christ. How true are the words of your song “Trust and obey, there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.” Since the Gospel only becomes a blessing to those who in trust and obedience turn to Christ, the church as the pillar of truth must without hesitation state what this involves. First, faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ out of which grows the confession that he is the Son of God (Romans 10:9). Second, repentance as a fundamental decision of man’s will to further on submit to Christ’s will. Third, baptism for the forgiveness of sin to remove through the power of Christ’s blood the obstacle which separates the sinner from God, while at the same time bestowing upon him the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). When this spiritual birth has taken place the result is a child of God, a new creature, and another living member is added to the body of Christ. Christ through the ministry of his body, the church, has freed another soul by his truth.

In most civilizations the birth of a baby is cause for rejoicing. And yet experienced parents realize that the ensuing growing-up process is a big task for all involved. Permit me to say, I can speak from experience as the father of four children. But truly, no matter how important it is that the church as “the pillar of truth” leads lost souls to the new birth, thereby gaining babes in Christ, she will fail her mission if she neglects to nurture those young members entrusted to her. In this respect she fulfills the mission of being “the support of the truth” in the sense that she is supporting what is necessary for the continued growth of all her members into maturity. Paul describes this very process in Ephesians 4:15 as “walking in the truth in love,” for the

purpose that “we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.” How practical and relevant this growing up must be, Paul shows in the following verses: “Lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:22-32).

These inspired words of Paul certainly show that one of the main missions of the church is the “support of the truth” within its own ranks. Her “walking in the truth in love” is the prerequisite of her being able to grow up in all aspects into Christ.

It seems to me worth mentioning that two principles which are often named in connection with the mission of the church are contained in this scripture just read, namely edification and sharing with those in need, in other words,

benevolence. Just as Jesus spent much time instructing his disciples, so the church must devote ample time in helping the members to develop into the image of Christ. As Christ's ministry in his earthly body may be summarized as doing good to others (Acts 10:38) so his church, as his present body on earth, must endeavor to relieve human distress and not just within her own fellowship. She cannot just be a support of the truth "in word" but "in deed and truth" (I John 3:18).

This "building up of the body of Christ", as Paul also calls it, depends, however, on the "proper working of each individual part." In order that each member of the body be properly equipped for the work of service, Christ gave his church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The first two ministries, the apostles and prophets, constitute with Christ as the cornerstone the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:26), because it was by them that he revealed through the Holy Spirit the mystery of Christ or the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19; 3:3-6). Again and again these men of God testified, as for instance Paul in Ephesus: "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27). Yes, Peter stated that he was writing this truth to fellow Christians again, so "that at any time after his departure they would be able to call these things to mind" (II Peter 1:12, 15). Those whom the apostles chose to carry on the spread of the "word of truth" they exhorted to "retain the standard of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13) and encouraged them to entrust the original gospel" to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). This advice applied to the evangelists as well as to the overseers, as is brought out by Paul when stating the prerequisites for a man desiring this office: "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that

he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (Titus 1:9).

In an age when a false concept of tolerance motivates people to hesitate to defend or even profess to have firm convictions in the realm of faith, it might be understandable that we are inclined to overlook the foregoing exhortations and warnings. It seems to me that we need to restore among us the firm belief of the early Christians that the “father of lies,” the one who “does not stand in the truth”, yes, the devil, is doing all in his power to hinder the mission of the church of God as “the pillar and support of the truth” (John 8:44). The apostle Paul stated in respect to Satan, ‘we are not ignorant of his schemes” (II Corinthians 11:15). According to our Lord false teachers come to us “in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15). Paul characterizes their approach among the disciples in the following way: “by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting” (Romans 16:18). Peter adds the following observation: “For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice . . . those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption” (II Peter 2:18, 19) . . . “Because of them the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of” (II Peter 2:2).

There can be no doubt, for Christ’s apostles a “distorted” gospel could not lead men to salvation, and members of the body of Christ will perish, if they lose “the love of the truth”, even if through indifference (II Thessalonians 2:10; Galatians 6:6-9). And because these inspired men of God saw the mission of the church as the pillar and support of the truth endangered by false teachers or ungodly living, they not only exhorted and warned, but took action when deeds appropriate to repentance were lacking.

The New Testament church during the first century considered it part of her mission to defend and preserve the truth which Christ entrusted to her, as Jude pleads in his letter: "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints." She kept her eye on those who caused dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which she learned. Her inspired apostles commanded: "Turn away from them!" (Romans 16:17). "Reject a factious man after a first and second warning . . ." (Titus 3:10). "If any one comes to you and does not bring this teaching (the teaching of Christ), do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds" (II John 10, 11). Do we realize that these last words were written by the apostle John, who in the same letter stressed love towards God and our fellow man? He knew only too well that without cleaving to the truth of Christ, love towards God and man is not possible. In this context it should be stated clearly that these severe measures were directed against anyone, who "advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the doctrine conforming to godliness" (I Timothy 6:3), as Paul writes to Timothy. The same apostle emphasizes, however, that there should be liberty in matters of opinion where the question of conscience often influenced by religious and social backgrounds is involved. In this realm Paul advised: "Let us not judge one another any more, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumblingblock in a brother's way" (Romans 14:13).

Church discipline, however, was not only directed towards those who taught error but also against members of the body of Christ, who publicly lived an immoral or undisciplined life. Just listen to the earnest words of Paul



when he saw the mission of the church endangered: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an undisciplined life and not according to the tradition which you received from us . . . And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame" (II Thessalonians 3:6, 14). When the church in Corinth remained inactive in a severe case of immorality of one of her members, he demanded in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" (I Corinthians 5:1, 4, 11, 13). The reason for these severe measures were twofold: one, the little leaven of sin should not be allowed to affect the whole lump of dough, namely the church, and two, the fallen brother was to be led to reform his life through true repentance, thereby serving again the mission of the church "walking in the truth in love."

Allow me to summarize what we have so far recognized as the mission of the church. As an agent she is charged on behalf of her Lord to be in business to complete his redemptive work in this world of conflict as he began it when he was in his body on our planet. As he considered his mission "to bear witness for the truth," so his church as his body is to be "the pillar and support of the truth." As a pillar of truth she is charged to make known to all nations the message of truth, the gospel, proclaiming in the risen Christ God's love which offers to all who desire, the privilege to become children of the heavenly father. It is her holy responsibility to pronounce to men and women how through faith in, repentance towards, confession of and baptism into Christ they may to this day receive forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit. All who experience in faith this spiritual new birth must be made to realize that they are now

members of Christ's body, who, according to their gifts, are to share in the mission of the church. This involves evangelism directed towards a lost world, but it also demands sharing in her mission as the support of the truth. Every member of the body by the will of the heavenly head must be "walking in the truth in love" for the purpose that all members "grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ." Supporting this continued growth ensures edification and sharing with those in need. If elders, deacons, evangelists and members continue in Christ's word as revealed once and for all through the apostles and prophets in the New Testament, the church can, even in our modern age, continue to be the pillar and support of the truth. I said intentionally the church *can* continue to be the pillar and support of the truth, but only if she takes the schemes of Satan as seriously as the inspired apostles did. They knew that "the father of lies," the devil, wants to neutralize the church into a pillar of half-truth and a support of worldliness. These men of God further realized that Satan works through human servants, who pose as preachers of righteousness, who may offer "smooth and flattering speech, promising freedom" but are not satisfied with the "standard of sound words" as God's spirit taught them through the apostles. Yes, because these spirit-guided apostles further knew by the warning of their Lord that such false teachers were savage wolves, not sparing the flock, drawing disciples after them (Acts 20:29, 30), they demanded of the overseers of the church the capability and willingness" to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). Should this prove fruitless their command was: "Reject a factious man after a first and second warning" (Titus 3:10). Do Churches of Christ today always take false teachers in their midst as seriously as the apostles did? Or do some of them rather solve the problem by applying those well-tried

American principles of “fair play”—“the time will take care of it” or “give the fellow another chance,” or maybe send him away to some other congregation with or without a nice letter of recommendation?

I know that in Germany many a soul has been lost to the church because evangelists shun their responsibility of stopping erroneous teachers from spreading their destructive concepts among the congregations. Often the attempt to repair at least some of the damage done ties up other evangelists on the field, not to speak of the financial expenses which such salvaging missions often cause.

In an age where the so-called new morality is showing its effects even among those who profess to be Christians, it is of utmost importance that immoral and undisciplined behavior of members of the church be approached as in New Testament days. If exhortation and encouragement to repent are not heeded, the church should withdraw fellowship, thereby making it clear to her members and to the world that she wants to continue to be the “support of the truth.”

May God grant all of us who seek earnestly to be living members in Christ’s body all over the world to have the courage to tell and live the truth in love, knowing full and well, as a German saying goes: “You cannot carry the torch of truth through this world without singeing the beard of some.” Let us further recognize that the enemies of truth often use in the defence of their self-chosen goals the terms “liberty” and “love” contrary to their biblical meaning, in order to stall church leaders in their actions against them. Erroneous teachers have always tried to pose in the role of the poor persecuted underdog in order to gain the sympathy of the well-meaning. Let us remember that there are some

mighty dangerous underdogs, who need to be challenged and exposed, if eternal damage to precious souls is to be curtailed.

True liberty is only found in submitting to Christ's truth. Liberty is not to do what we want to do, but what we ought to do. May God grant us in his mercy that we may be counted among those of whom John wrote: "Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know, that we are in Him" (I John 2:5). Yes, may we by this standard be known to be Christians, thereby serving the mission of Christ's church as "the pillar and support of the truth."

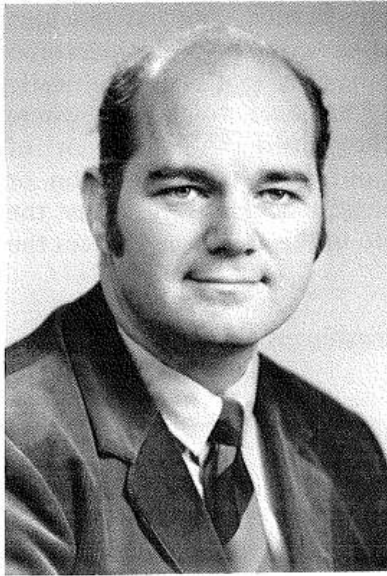
## FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH

### C. PHILIP SLATE

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Unpublished theses.

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Although it was as a prelude to the creation of woman that God said, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18), history, biblical and non-biblical, shows that marriage is illustrative of man's capacity and need at various levels to share life with others. People thus live in all types of groups because people make people. "Iron sharpens iron,

and one man sharpens another” (Prov. 27:17). The nature of valued company influences individual characteristics. “He who walks with wise men becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm” (Prov. 13:20).

Since people do require association with other people, it is not surprising that the concept of “fellowship” appears regularly in ancient and modern literature. The Greek words for it (*koinonia*, *koinonos*, etc.) are used in both the Septuagint and the pre-Christian Greek writings to describe marriage, business partnerships and the like;<sup>1</sup> and even in the New Testament James, John and Simon are said to be fishing *koinonoi* (Lk. 5:10).

While fellowship is common to human beings, the emphasis here is on that fellowship which is in and a consequence of being the church of Christ. The way in which fellowship is extended, refused or withdrawn demonstrates the value one places upon it, so its doctrinal basis is critically important. But since that topic has been treated elsewhere the concern here will be the nature and behavior of fellowship. If its behavior is not sound, its extension or withdrawal will be of little consequence anyway. Thus, the aim here is to consider fellowship in the church as it faces the future.

## I. Biblical Doctrine of Fellowship: A Glimpse.

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Hauck, “*koinos*, *koinonos*, . . .” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley (ed. and tr.) Used by permission. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965). Vol. III, pp. 689-809.

A brief outline of the biblical doctrine calls attention to the crucial aspects of fellowship in the church. (A) It is God-given and gospel-based, not a creation of man. God calls people into the fellowship of his Son (II Cor. 1:9; cf. I Cor. 10:16). It is a fellowship of the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 13:14; cf. Phil. 2:1). By walking in the light one has fellowship with God (I John 1:5-7), partaking of his holiness (Heb. 10:12) and the divine nature (II Pet. 1:3-4). But this is not merely a matter of individuals having fellowship with God. By sharing a common salvation (Jude 3) and the same spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3ff.; cf. Rom. 15:27) a bond is created between those who thus share God's blessings, and that bond becomes the basis for a fellowship among Christians themselves.

(B) Fellowship with God issues in a solidarity among those who share it. In Christ racial and national differences were to be sunk into one new man (Eph. 2:11-3:6). They were to be aware of their involvement in a world-wide work of God (Col. 1:5-6). This solidarity was to involve more than a common name and goal; it was to involve their feeling a comradeship, a joint-participation with fellow-Christians who needed each other. The Philippians felt a part of what Paul suffered (Phil. 4:10,14), and a partnership was felt among the persecuted (Heb. 10:32-3). The churches of Macedonia begged for the favor of helping their Jewish brothers in Judea (II Cor. 8:4). Indeed, it was this sense of solidarity which Paul was seeking to strengthen by promoting the contribution of the Gentile Christians.<sup>2</sup> Thus, fellowship with God

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<sup>2</sup>Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*. (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1966).

created a fellowship among those who shared it.

(C) But this was more than inert empathy; it expressed itself in various actions which embodied the fellowship. (1) There was a sharing of physical possessions to meet human needs. The churches in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44-5; 4:32-5), Antioch (Acts 11:27-30) and Greece (Rom. 15:26-7; II Cor. 8-9) shared their goods with their fellows. Paul even called the money itself the *koinonias* (tr., "contribution") (II Cor. 9:13). (2) Similarly, the Christians shared the responsibility of God's work; they were partners in it. Paul used the term "partners" for both Titus (II Cor. 8:23) and Philemon (Phm. 17). Through their identification with and lively support of Paul, the Philippians had a "partnership" in the gospel (Phil. 1:5); they shared his trouble and embodied their concern by sending him help (4:14-15). It was no mere financial arrangement; Paul received it as "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (4:18).

Further, (3) the early Christians shared their lives in association and joint-activities. They were to avoid fellowship (sharing) with iniquity and darkness (II Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:7-8,11), but they were to be with fellow-Christians, apparently because of the beneficial effects of that sharing. Paul rejoiced over Philemon's refreshing the hearts of the saints (Phm. 7) and calls for him to refresh his own heart by his treatment of Onesimus (v.20). Whatever the meetings were in Hebrews 10:25, they were considered important because they were somehow connected with stirring up one another to love and good works (v. 24) and "encouraging one another" (v. 25). The way the early church met for prayer when Peter was in prison (Acts 12:5, 12f.), opened their homes to one another (Acts 21:8-10; Heb. 13:2), shared meals (I Cor. 5:11; cf. Jude 3), enjoyed one another's



company (Rom. 15:24) and mutually encouraged one another (Rom. 1:11-12) suggests that the early church was what we call a "reference group" which served to strengthen individual members.

A reader of the New Testament is familiar with most of this, and doubtless we are at times envious of what they had in various churches. Indeed, of this we sing, appreciatively or longingly:

When each can feel his brother's sigh,  
And with him bear a part;  
When sorrow flows from eye to eye,  
And joy from heart to heart.

If I understand something of a fragmented and increasingly anonymous West today, then the fellowship which is possible in the church deserves emphasis beyond what it has received in the recent past.

## II. Two Enemies of Fellowship Today

If fellowship in the church will do for Christians what the New Testament intimates it will do, we may be sure the Evil One will do what he can to thwart it. Of many possible hindrances I shall mention two.

(A) An unbalanced stress on individualism in Western civilization since the Renaissance and the Reformation has minimized the corporate nature of the church. Protestant ecclesiology has generally been weak, partially due to its stress on the individuality of salvation, righteousness and judgment. Consequently, the biblical emphasis on the corporate nature of the church has been neglected. While as a people we have taken seriously the doctrine of the church, it

is likely that Western cultural emphasis on individualism has hindered our full attention to collective aspects of the faith. The effects of this neglect have been partially obscured at times because some have lived in benevolent communities which have, perhaps unconsciously, nourished many Christian virtues which, in other cultures, have had to be taught almost exclusively in relationships with the congregation. But these favorable communities are becoming smaller and fewer. Loneliness and anonymity ensue, as they have existed in large urban areas for many years. Those of us who have worked in different cultures, even European, have seen new Christians struggle to hold on to their faith when most other groups (family, school, work, etc.) militated against their Christian group which provided little more than Sunday and Wednesday worship and study sessions. Many of us have inadequately realized the place and potency of the church as a reference group, as a community in which people develop their ideas, ideals and life as individual Christians; and we have had little practice in developing churches which serve as strong reference groups for people. Is it because an unbiblical individualism has kept us from stressing the kind of groups in which true individual responsibility is developed?

A concomitant of acute individualism is the way in which fellowship terminology and emphasis can be neglected. The Lord's supper, a first class occasion for stressing our mutual participation in Christ (I Cor. 10:16) and the benefits of this over the non-Christian position, can be hurried through without comment, except perhaps to stress that Jesus wants us to do it. Money sent to an evangelist in virgin territory may be entered on the monthly financial statement as a "disbursement", whereas it could be stressed as a sharing in the gospel, an offering to God (Phil. 4:18).

Individual salvation and judgment are biblical doctrines, but only a part of the biblical doctrine. When an individual decides to yield to Christ he is also deciding to share a life with other Christians; and his behavior in that group becomes a part of the basis upon which he will be judged as an individual. His and others' readiness for judgment will be determined in part by their life in the church.

(B) The life-structure of the local church is also hindering or beneficial to fellowship. Whether a church has elders or not, certain practical decisions have to be made about the way in which that group is to function. For example, while individuals are urged to study, it is recognized that the church should provide study situations. Most churches have some system of classes by which people study by age-levels, while some insist on everyone's studying in one group. These respective decisions determine the structure of life of local churches. Rudge<sup>3</sup> has shown how churches may be operated by their leaders according to any of five major theories of business management. The way a group is handled determines what it is able to do and the way it feels about itself, and this is vitally related to the hindrance or facilitation of fellowship within the group. What can, and does, happen at times is that leaders employ, albeit unconsciously, a method of "management" which has been successful in a business organization but which is unsuitable for the biblical designs of the church.

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<sup>3</sup> Peter F. Rudge, *Ministry and Management: A Study of Ecclesiastical Administration*. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1968); cf. Rudge, "Styles of Administration in Churches in Their Theological Presuppositions," *Expository Times* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark). LXXXII:8 (May, 1971), pp. 28-31.

It is known that feelings of comradeship come more naturally in small than in large churches. Size is important, since frequency and length of interaction determine how well people get to know and profit from each other. In larger churches where nothing is done to cope with the problem, communication tends to be one-way and impersonal (via bulletin boards and newsletters). Anonymity is increased and a feeling of uselessness can follow ("Let George do it."). Consequently, the members tend to know few people in depth and fail to feel they are vitally needed in that group. Wicker<sup>4</sup> has made some studies of churches and found that the size of the group, excepting efforts to overcome the problem, affect the level of joint-participation and feeling of belonging.

If congregational mergers are indicative of the future, and Ira North is right in saying that "consolidation is coming,"<sup>5</sup> it can be expected that, along with the advantages of larger churches, there will be certain inherent hindrances to fellowship. But what can be done? The notion of limiting the size of a church to one hundred members is unbiblical and has at least as many problems as the advocacy of bigness. The lack of fellowship is thus met by opposite

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<sup>4</sup> Allan W. Wicker, "Size of Church Membership and Members' Support of Church Behavior Settings," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol. 13, No. 3 (1969), pp. 378-88; cf. Allan W. Wicker and Anne Mehler, "Assimilation of New Members in a Large and a Small Church," *Journal of Applied Psychology* "Vol. 55, No. 2 (April 1971, pp. 151-156."

<sup>5</sup> Ira North, *Consolidation is Coming!* (Order copies from the Madison church of Christ, Madison, Tennessee.)

reactions: some claim the larger group offers variety and richness of fellowship in work and life; others recoil from bigness and "efficiency of operation," contenting themselves temporarily with small groups which meet for prayer and study. But whatever solutions are offered should be solidly grounded on the biblical teachings about the nature of the church itself.

### III. A Solution: The Body of Christ

Miner<sup>6</sup> has tabulated an exhaustive list (nearly one hundred of them!) of the New Testament ways of viewing the church. It is, of course, dangerous to focus attention exclusively on any one or two images of the church, but it is likely that for the problems and needs mentioned above the conception of the church as the "body of Christ" offers more help than any other.

Paul presents the church as the body of Christ in four Epistles (Rom. 12; I Cor. 12; Eph. 1 and 4; Col. 1). Most scholarly discussions of this concept seem to have focused attention on the Christian's relationship to Christ as the head, while understressing the function of the body. It is what Paul says about the purpose and function of that body which is of concern here. While the fellowship words do not occur in the immediate "body" passages (but cf. Rom. 13:13), the concept of sharing life and service is certainly present. What is of importance here is that when the local church strives to operate according to the body principle it is likely to

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<sup>6</sup> Paul S. Miner, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961).

facilitate the fellowship which is needed as the church faces the future. There seem to be three critically important facets of this concept which have bearing on fellowship in the church:

(A) *The body of Christ is a corporate entity.*—As in a physical body the separate members make a body, “so we, though many, are one body in Christ” (Rom. 12:4; I Cor. 12:12). The act of becoming a Christian inevitably places the individual in the body (I Cor. 12:13) where his individuality is not lost (v. 27) but invested with added significance. The church is thus neither a mere collection of individual Christians nor a group in which the individual is subsumed beyond identity. Rather, the individual deliberately functions as a part of a body, after the analogy of a physical body.

This principle is incipient in other conceptions of the church (e.g., Eph. 2:19-22; I Pet. 2:5) and likely has as its background the Old Testament way of viewing groups of people as one (e.g., Deut. 33; Hos. 5:3-4; etc.). The corporate estimates of the seven churches of Asia are also instructive at this point (Rev. 2-3). There is validity in G. Ernest Wright’s view that

The biblical story must not be interpreted as the progressive emancipation of the individual, but instead as God’s action in history to create a community in which the responsible individual finds his true being.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> G. Ernest Wright, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society*. (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), p. 97.

Body membership is not optional, since it takes place at baptism (I Cor. 12:13). If Robinson<sup>8</sup> is correct in claiming that "disunion is dismemberment" then the thought of individual autonomy should be seriously circumscribed.

Today, as at Rome and Corinth, churches need to pay careful attention to the corporate nature of the church. Significantly, in both of these passages the local church is in view. Specialization of function is inherent in a body and necessary to its growth (Eph. 4:16), but it is to be a specialization within a solid unit. Ministry (*diakonia*), in its broad sense, occurs in three of the body passages (Rom. 12:7; I Cor. 12:5; Eph. 4:12) so as to show that it is shared within and for the benefit of the group. Where churches stress this corporate principle on the local level and seek to "operate" according to this body-principle, a solid contribution is made to the feeling of sharing, jointly participating in what the church is and does. But solidarity has a complement in diversity.

(B) *The body of Christ accents member function.*—Prior to specifying the different functions of the body (Rom. 12:6b-8), Paul urged, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *let us use them*" (v. 6a). Where there is no diversity of function there is no real body (I Cor. 12:18-20). At Corinth there seems to have been an inordinate emphasis on the use of tongues, and those with other gifts felt inferior and served less. Paul attacked that abuse by

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<sup>8</sup> J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*. (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1952), p. 51.

referring to the body principle. As in a physical body, all members of Christ's body are necessary and need to function. While earlier in the letter Paul urged a unity at Corinth, in 12:14ff., he argued that precisely because it is a body there *must* be a diversity of function, and that in that diversity the body is enriched (cf. Eph. 4:16). Overstressing some ministries while neglecting others is against the body principle.

The continuity or cessation of the gifts specified in I Corinthians 12:28-30, Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11 does not affect the body principle. Whatever the local body has, it should use. Ministry is not the equivalent of preaching, and "mutual ministry" certainly does not mean "male quests for the pulpit." Frank Worgan, a fine British preacher, once cryptically remarked: "Mutual ministry means that any other member of the church has as much right as I do to sweep out the church building!" Perhaps one segment of fellowship is hindered more through tacitly narrowing the definition of ministry than anything else. The list in Romans 12:6-8 is rich in implications for broad ministry of the body.

Several churches, even very large ones, have found it possible to enjoy a fellowship superior to other churches with half their membership. It is done by providing (a) a large number of specific and meaningful activities, so organized that (b) there is a comparatively high degree of life-sharing by the participants. For larger churches, zoning programs, other small groups and classes are movements in the right direction; but the body principle suggests lines along which these may be extended in both variety and size. The *nature* of these activities determines whether human needs are really met; their *size* determines whether certain action is shared; and their *number* within one church affects member feeling of



being needed. But the body principle requires a framework within which the members may actively function within and for the body.

(C) *The body of Christ must have inter-related members.*—It is possible to have a corporation or group in which there is very little inter-relationship between the members. Ferdinand Tonnies distinguished two types of groups: *Gesellschaft* (associational, low level of inter-relationship and inter-dependence) and *Gemeinschaft* (communal, high rate of inter-dependence). Specific local churches may be either type. But the New Testament indicates that the church of Christ is to be the latter. If Romans 12:9-13 refers to the behavior of those mentioned in vs. 6-8, then member inter-relationship is obvious. In I Corinthians 12 the individually apportioned gifts (v. 11) were to be used for the common good (v. 7). Paul's discussion in vs. 15-24a must surely be taken as a rebuke of attempts at member independence. Rather, in Christ's body, as in a physical body, God intends that "the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (vs. 25-6).

This arrangement is different from that in a business in which each one is assigned a task and carries it out with little knowledge of or concern for what others are doing. The body concept involves an inter-dependence of members, and care must be taken that a Christian group not be operated by some business management principle which violates the body concept. If Paul could be refreshed by Philemon (Phm. 7, 20) and longed to enjoy the company of the Roman Christians (Rom. 15:24) and participate in mutual encouragement (1:12), although he was a gift-giving apostle (1:11), we are likely to have something to give to and receive from one

another. The scholarly and unscholarly need each other; benevolence and evangelism need each other; various specialized functions are in need of body support.

Through the ages the following of Jesus Christ has required that special attention be given to various issues within and outside the church (e.g., idolatry, the nature of Jesus, faith, appropriate worship, morality, etc.). It seems clear that the church today, and in the immediate future, needs particularly to stress that quality of life which is found in Christ and manifested among his followers. In some parts of the world the situation is so acute that the church can survive only when it has at the local level the kind of fellowship outlined above. There is a hard-nosed insistence that Christians show what it means to be Christian. It is like the Italian farmer who boasted that his flock of chickens were direct descendants of the cock that crowed when Peter denied Jesus. Unimpressed, a Devonshire farmer asked, "And be they good layers?" The real question is whether Christians have, here and now, what Christians are supposed to have?

At present I know of no way to achieve this which fails (a) to stress in teaching the corporate nature of those who are in Christ, (b) to provide a realistic framework within which every member is both trained and encouraged to function actively, and (c) to urge and facilitate a deliberate joint-functioning of the members. It seems clear enough that this cannot be done solely through public meetings of the church, as valuable and necessary as they are; that both size and purpose of local churches require the use of various smaller groups in which tasks may be performed and Christians may learn to help each other. A loose association of worshipers, a mere collection of people, is not a New Testament view of the church!

But small groups are no panacea for leaders or members. (a) Where there are dissident members or faction tendencies small groups may nourish the faction.<sup>9</sup> But avoiding small groups does not prevent faction; dissident people may start their own groups. But where people are committed to the body principle, the use of small groups is viewed as the body at work. This is why it is critically important that Christians understand the body principle. (b) Past small group work has tended to be one-sided and thus not entirely consistent with the many-member and multipurpose nature of the body. While one church may have many small groups meeting, those groups may all serve only one or two purposes (e.g., study, prayer, tasks, etc.) and neglect others.<sup>10</sup> Small groups can be a form of retreat from the full life and work involved in being in Christ. But they may also be the means by which, in addition to various public meetings of the whole church, even a large church can serve true body purposes and thus enhance the quality and extent of fellowship in that church.

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<sup>9</sup> See a discussion on this by Floyd V. Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," *Journal of Biblical Literature*. LVIII (1939), pp. 105-112, especially point no. 3.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of values and problems see the special issue on "Ministry Through Small Groups" (Clude H. Reid, ed.) of *Pastoral Psychology* (Manhasset, N.Y.: Meredith Pub. Co.). 18:172 (March 1967).

*Conclusion*

I remain convinced that the Lord's way is best for whatever circumstance may arise within or around the church, and that his way is to be found in the application of biblical principles. The response of the-church-as-the-body-of-Christ to the need for fellowship is a case in point.

Merryle Stanley Rukeyser tells of an unemployed worker who stopped by a farm during the last depression and asked for some food. The farmer agreed, but said the man would have to work for it. But finding the man unable to paint or hoe, he asked, "Just what can you do?" He replied, "I'm an unemployed advertising writer." "That's excellent," said the farmer. "I want to sell this farm. Will you write a piece of copy for the Sunday newspapers?" The man sat down and wrote a glowing but accurate description of the farm. The farmer looked the copy over and said, "I would be a fool to sell this farm." So it is with the Christian who is reminded of what is available in Christ. I think I can speak for those who have come to taste that fellowship in some local churches, and say, because there is no alternative to it, "This is just what we are looking for; we'll keep it!"

## CHURCH RENEWAL

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Parents: Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Saunders, Carol Drive, Columbia, Tennessee. Two brothers, one sister.

Born: July 26, 1937, in Teays Valley, West Virginia.

Baptized: 1953 by Jimmy McNeil at Pine Grove Church of Christ in Teays Valley.

#### Preaching:

Congregational: Began in 1953 with weekend appointments. While at Freed-Hardeman College, preached regularly at Hendrix Chapel church of Christ north of *Florence*, Alabama. While at Harding, preached at *McDougal* church of Christ in Northeast, Arkansas. Moved to McDougal in fall of 1959 to first full-time



preaching. *Corning*, Arkansas, September, 1962, through December 31, 1970.

Evangelistic meetings, etc.: Preach in 10-12 evangelistic meetings per year. Many youth meetings and rallies. Several campaigns (Arkansas, South Carolina, Wisconsin).

College lectures: A week of spiritual development each year at *Crowley's Ridge College*, Paragould, Arkansas. Speaker on *Freed-Hardeman Col-*

*lege, Harding College, Abilene Christian College, Michigan Christian College lectures. Scheduled for Weyburn Christian College and Fort Worth Christian College.*

Education: Attended Freed-Hardeman College 1955-1958 where earned A.A. degree; Harding College 1958-1959 where earned the B.A. degree; did some work at Arkansas State University; near completion of M.A. degree in New Testament from Harding Graduate School of Religion.

Chairman of Board of Trustees of Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, Arkansas.

Nominated Outstanding Young Man of Year in 1970.

Travel: Spent 15 months travelling, three in United States and 12 overseas in trip that included about 60 nations around the world. Strengthened and encouraged national churches; evangelistic work; observed the church at work in the world; searched for universals of the Gospel of Christ; spent time in reflection and meditation.

Delivered Lectures on Preaching at Abilene Christian College in October, 1971.

Area coordinator with Herald of Truth since 1964. Have spoken at several workshops.

Daily radio program for 11 years in Corning.

Full-time daily radio speaker for Herald of Truth beginning January 1, 1972. Resides in Abilene, Texas.

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The source of renewal is Jesus Christ. He is the Vine who furnishes life to fruit-bearing branches (John 15:1-11). He is the Head, "from whom the whole body, joined and knit

together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16). When so related to the Head, it "grows with a growth that is from God" (Colossians 2:19b). Renewal is rooted in Jesus Christ.

Human attempts at renewal are inadequate. Better programs, better projects, better advertising, better facilities will not renew the church; human hands cannot renew the church. Mountains of human endeavor can quiver, yet yield only a mouse. Human attempts will fail.

Renewal is found in *relationship*, a right and real relationship to Jesus Christ. Short-cuts fail. So do detours. Easy paths lead nowhere. The church must face Jesus. Before Him she must bow in humility and penitence. She must become "poor in spirit" that she might be "filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19).

Only in her poverty can the church know renewed life and strength. Not financial poverty. Not numerical poverty. Not doctrinal poverty. But poverty of spirit. Poverty of self.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

The church is the body of Christ. "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (I Corinthians 12:27). Paul further speaks of the "church, which is his body" (Ephesians 1:22, 23).

As Christ's body, the church receives orders from Christ, the Head. Nourishment is derived from Him. But, the question is—how?

The *how* is not found in re-arranging Bible classes, worship periods, group formation. Renewal cannot be mobilized. Nor does the stream of renewal flow from human ingenuity. All such appeals will fail because they do not go deep enough. They at best produce only temporary results while diverting attention from the real issue.

The *how* is found in a revolutionary principle that was announced by Jesus: *We must die to live.*

Jesus accepted this principle for His own life. Of Himself He said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

What was true of Jesus is true for His body, the church. In fact, He continued: "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:25, 26).

Self-denial, cross-bearing and Christ-following are combined. "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?' " (Matthew 16:24-26).

Christians are to give themselves as a "living sacrifice." "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable



to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). The sacrifice is unconscious of itself.

Paul succinctly states it: “For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

For the Christian, for the church, the revolutionary principle is the death of self.

Yet the church seems so alive to itself. So preoccupied. At times neurotic. Attendance. Contribution. Budgets. How desperately she often clings to these. How fearful when down. How joyful when up. Her eyes are so set on herself. Her plans. Programs. Preacher.

Further evidence of the church’s preoccupation with itself is fear. Suspicion. We hang on to traditions for fear we will lose our identity. What is the identity of the church? What is tradition? How much of the present church could we do without and still have the church? Renewal must consider the core of the problem. It must reach for the essence. Only then will we recognize tradition.

It is time to move beyond our fear. Time to trust Christ as Lord. It is time to appeal to His word for what is really essential and to cling to that for all we have. But things that are not bound in His Word we must not fight for. Cling to the essential but be flexible in other matters.

The church worries about itself. It is fretful. Protective. Fearful for tomorrow. It clings to itself. This betrays the death to self principle taught by Jesus. When the church clings to itself; it will lose itself. Its hope lies in Jesus Christ. The church must cling to Him.

Do we have a selfish church? A church that boasts of her own accomplishments? Her own victories?

And, what about the ego? Whether in an individual or church? Who is at the center? Is a man at the center? To whom do we appeal? Who can be offended? How can there be jealousy? Envy? Pride? Do churches have egos? Is there any rivalry among us?

Oh, how many of our problems can be traced to *live* selves? Men and women who have not died to self. How can Christ rule as Head when men occupy thrones? How can the church be renewed? Who stands in the way of renewal? When the church is full of itself, it cannot be full of Jesus. Crucify self and Jesus fills full.

Even here there are no easy formulas. Simple solutions. Death is painful. Each man must wrestle with his own soul. He must face himself. He must inquire. At the deep center of his life. Who rules? Self? Or, Christ?

At the heart of renewal is the death of self. It is true of the Christian. It is true of the church. The revolutionary principle of renewal, of life and power, is the death of self. Only Jesus really taught that.

### RESOURCES FOR RENEWAL

If the death of self is at the heart of renewal, then Lordship must be, its resurrection life. Paul has a classic discussion of Lordship and its relation to the church in Romans 14.

First, there were problems in the Roman church. Problems over meats and days. Differences of opinion existed. Brethren were divided. The church was threatened.

Brethren were apparently centered on each other. How they scrutinized each other! Examined each other. Criticized each other. Here is a church with its attention centered on itself.

Paul recognized it. Carefully, he lifted their vision. The man who observed the day did so in "honor of the Lord." The one who ate, ate in "honor of the Lord." Those who abstained, abstained in "honor of the Lord." Paul set the eyes of the church on the Lord. Off self.

In classic language he continued to give the life-empowering principle: "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Romans 14:8, 9). Christ died and lived to be Lord! To be Lord! To be Lord!

Does the church have problems? Are there differences? On what basis can they be settled? Only on the acceptance of Christ as Lord. Men who accept that Lordship are drawn closer and closer together. Christ as Lord is the point on which all eyes are set. Christ as Lord is the center. Christ as Lord is that to which we are all moving. And so we move closer together.

When the church is surrendering to Christ as Lord, she will experience renewal at its deepest level.

Accepting His Lordship means involvement with His Word. "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7). Our "new nature" is being "renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Colossians 3:10). The "word of Christ" is to "dwell" in us "richly" (Colossians 3:16).

Involvement with the Word means strength for the surrendered life. It is health. It is life.

Too often shoddy Bible classes, shallow literature and "unfired" teachers are passed off for Bible study. Because a little material that is Bible-flavored has been covered is no assurance of meaningful involvement with the Word of God. Something within a person's heart must get involved with something in the Word before anything happens. God's Word is living, active, sharp, discerning (Hebrews 4:12). That is what must be experienced.

Over-hauling the Bible school department in terms of literature, facilities, aids, methods will not bring renewal. Only teachers who have died to self, who are surrendered to His Lordship and who are themselves deeply involved with God through His Word can bring renewal.

The same is true in the pulpit. Is the pulpit selfless? Is Christ ruling—in attitude as well as word? Did selflessness and Christ's rule govern the preparation? Has the life been gripped by God? Have the words been tried in the fires of day by day living? You see, the life is the issue! If the life is dead to self, alive to Christ, then all else flows beautifully. Renewal will be the order of the day.

Uncertainty gives way to certainty when men and

women are involved with the Word of God. Renewal cannot take place in an atmosphere of uncertainty. For too many years too few lives have declared the knowledge of God. We have been limping. Unsure. Defensive. Protective. But such will not appeal to men. We must speak with authority. With power. Yet always born of an evident relationship with God.

Third, prayer is essential to renewal. The selfless, Christ-ruled, Word-involved life will utter words to God. Such a life must communicate, beyond the human realm, beyond time.

Christians may need instruction in prayer. If so, why not turn to the great prayer models of the New Testament? For example, the prayer Jesus taught the disciples to pray in Matthew 6. What a prayer! No other single thing has affected my life as deeply as this prayer. The One who knew most about God and most about man put the two together in these brief words. How significant each word! How tragic its history in our lives!

At the heart of the epistles is prayer. Paul prayed. He taught the churches to pray. But, how many churches today are listening? How many churches know the content of Paul's prayers for the church? How many churches are praying them? How many know what they mean when they read them? Are they not at the heart of the needs of the church? Is the stuff of renewal not there? No church can seriously pray these prayers without experiencing renewal and power. These are the models. We are far from them. But we must move closer. And the time is now.

Trite congregational praying must be replaced by prayers born of selfless, Christ-ruled, Word-involved lives. Order of

service may sometimes be important; but new lives meaningfully involved with God are of greater importance. Renewal of form will not assure renewal of heart.

Worship is also rich in resources for renewal. Worship should pull a man up out of himself. It should lift. It should inspire. It should transform. It should purify.

But worship cannot be programmed. Worship comes from hearts. Hearts who have passed through the fire. Hearts who have wrestled with self. Who have accepted Jesus as Lord. Who study and pray. Worship must be "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

The dying church has dull worship. People are bored. Nothing happens. The Lord's Supper is abused. So is singing. And praying. And preaching. And giving. Worship is not a form to be observed but an interaction of our spirit with God. If nothing happens in our hearts, have we worshipped? Is the point simply to go or is the point to be changed? Is worship a form to be preserved or a deep spiritual action in which we engage?

How can we talk of renewal until we have met these life issues? Will we not continue to bring to worship our pride, prejudices, traditions, indifference, formality until we have died to self? Self is at the root of the problem. Reading a thousand books on church renewal is unlikely to bring about renewal. We must do the hard work necessary at the center of the problem. And it must reach into all these areas.

When worship is rich in the work of renewal, men and women will have assembled to *reach for God*. In that reach

things happen. But, do men understand? Do they come to reach? Do they know to reach?

Fifth, service. The church that is serving is the church that is healthy. It undergoes regular renewal of heart and power.

Jesus challenges us: "It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28). Is the church full of slaves and servants? Or, is it full of people who want to sit at the right hand and at the left?

Here again we are at the heart of the revolutionary principle with which we began—the death of self. Only those who have died to themselves will serve others genuinely.

In the congregation of which you are a part who is the greatest? Who is the greatest? What person would you name? Applying the words of Jesus, would the first be last and the last first? Who is the greatest? Are Christians seeking greatness along the lines of service? Or, brotherhood papers? Or, offices? Or, a place up front?

Has our spirit of service taken us into the "highways and byways"? Are we bidding sinners to come in? Hair and all? Dirt and all? Welfare and all?

Is our service dependent on our seeing revolutionary changes taking place in the lives of everyone we serve? If so,

do we not have our reward? Do we serve for the sake of Christ? Or do we serve to satisfy ego?

Do our worship periods indicate the fruits of service? In those who attend? Are those present from backgrounds very different from our own? Would they be welcome? Could the real sinners get in? Would we be embarrassed? Would we wonder what other brethren would think if they knew we were letting such people attend?

Bring the sinners in and we won't be so troubled about answering questions no one is asking. We won't be plagued with boredom. I tell you it will be exciting! New problems. New questions. We will be driven to Christ. To His Word. To prayer. The work of reconciliation will be in evidence. We will learn to live together. To give up our prejudices. And fears. Self will die. Christ will reign. God will be glorified. Sinners will be saved. The church will be renewed.

For renewal, let's open our hearts to the world even as Jesus did. Let's be willing to be stoned, beaten, crucified. Christ suffered. Let's be vulnerable to the blows of the world. Let's venture into the depths of life. Let it try our souls. Let it expose our weaknesses. Tremble. But, run to Christ. Run to the fellowship of Christians.

Let's have done with in-grownness. Withdrawal—begone! Isolation—never. Let's run the risk.

Let the church die to itself. Let's give ourselves away. Our fears. Our problems. "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:38). What a principle!



What hope for renewal! Give your money away—to others. Give your time away. Give your talent. You possess only what you have given away. Let the church give herself away at all levels and watch her grow. See her joy. Know her peace.

The church is still the place that God wants men to “see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things” (Ephesians 3:9). Can men see God’s plan in the church? Is it exciting? Is it full of hope? Can men see reconciliation taking place? With God and man? Can men see the love Jesus had for sinners? The selflessness? The courage? The joy? Is the church where it is happening?

How we must love the church. As it is. With its faults and failings. But with its hope. The church is God’s plan. The plan is good. It will work.

The crucial issue is: Will I give myself up to Christ? Will I repent? Will I deeply turn from self-rule to Christ’s rule? When I am dead to self, Lordship, God’s Word, prayer, worship and service will flow into my life, into the church, and renewal will happen.

Repentance may be the need. It is the need.

“Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

## THE CHURCH, THE HOME, AND THE FUTURE

### PAUL FAULKNER

Born: Fort Worth, Texas, September 24, 1929

Higher Education:

B.S.—Abilene Christian College, 1952. Elected President of Freshman class. Listed among "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities."

M.S.—Abilene Christian College, 1961.

M.R.E.—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966.

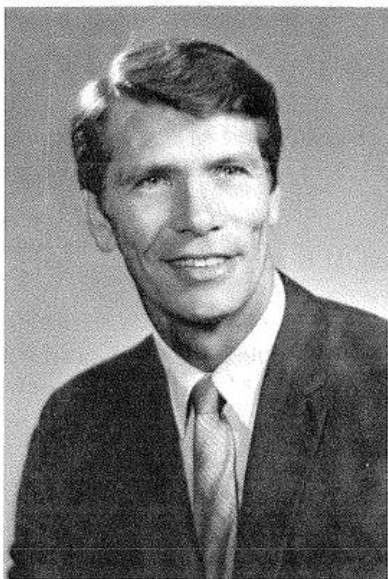
Ed.D.—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968.

Major: Psychology      Minor: Philosophy

Professional Relations:

Member of the American Psychological Association

Member of the Southwestern Psychological Association



Founder and Director of the Christian Counseling Clinic in Irving, Texas.

Established private practice in Family Counseling in Abilene February, 1969.

Joined the faculty of Abilene Christian College in 1957.

Served as Dean of Men at Abilene Christian College from 1958-1965.

Presently Associate Professor of Bible: Specialty—Psychology of Religion.

Athletics:

High School: Equaled the

Look Magazine's National Champion Pole Vault record.

College: Collegiate champion of the pole vault and/or javelin in such meets as Texas, Kansas and Drake Relays. Represented Abilene Christian College in NCAA and AAU National meets.

Minister:

He has served as a minister of the gospel in congregations in Kansas, North Carolina and Texas for nineteen years.

Youth Activities:

Addresses High school and University assemblies and classes on a regular basis.

Civic Activities:

Works with civic groups including speeches before all the major civic clubs, also before PTA, FHA, District Teacher's meetings and scores of commencement and baccalaureate exercises in the Colleges and public High Schools. He has also served on committees with the Chamber of Commerce. He is a member of Rotary International.

Articles Published in: *Firm Foundation*, *Teen-Age Christian* and *20th Century Christian*.

Family:

Wife: The former Gladys Shoemaker of Ft. Worth, Texas

Children: Deborah (born 1953), Von (born 1955), Bradley (born 1960) and Connie (born 1963).

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I have a son who grew normally until his fifteenth year, at which time he grew an amazing six inches in eight months. This was a shock to us since we had to completely overhaul his wardrobe—nothing would fit. What would have happened to us if he had spurted to a height of twelve feet? This Goliath would not shock us; he would *paralyze* us. This is

indeed what *has* happened to our present culture. Our world population is not growing normally; it is exploding. The composite knowledge of the world is not growing; it, too, is exploding! Juvenile delinquency, divorce, urbanization and ecological problems are no longer growing—they are exploding.

All missionaries should be trained to recognize and adjust to culture shock as they enter a new culture. Not until recently, however, did anyone realize that our own culture was changing so rapidly that we were having culture shock within our own culture. Alvin Toffler has written his best seller around this very theme, appropriately entitled *Future Shock*. He calls future shock “the disorientation people feel when the future arrives too fast for them.” In my own life (I was born in 1929) we have gone from horse drawn garbage and milk wagons in Fort Worth, Texas, to automobiles on the moon. Toffler states:

... the enormous changes ahead will transform traditional family structures and sexual attitudes. They will smash conventional relationships between old and young. They will overthrow our values in respect to money and success. They will alter work, play, and education beyond recognition. And they will do all this in a context of spectacular, elegant, yet frightening scientific advance.<sup>2</sup>

Ferdinand Lundberg, author of *The Coming World Transformation*, says: “The family is dead except for the first year or two of child raising.” According to psychoanalyst William Wolf, “This will be its only function.”<sup>3</sup>

In a true sense, the home and the church, as they face the future, are not faced with growing problems. They are faced with an explosion of problems. We are living in a

culture that is outgrowing its clothes, almost every year. Are we able to cope with the psychedelic churches, free universities, and wife swapping "key" clubs that presently vex our state and nation? They are but a foretaste of things to come.

It is becoming tragically evident to an amazing degree that *our* children are filing for divorce, *our* children riot, drop out, cop out, or drop pills with the "best" of those in the world. *Our* university students have adopted strange philosophies about love, and suicide is no longer a stranger in our midst.

We have not exactly handled well the problems that have been thrust upon us in the *past*. It remains to be seen how well we will respond to the present and future problems that are falling all too heavily upon us. We do not curse our teen-age son for growing out of his clothes. Somehow or other we must also manage to shift into second gear and come up with that which is needed to meet our present-future shock. It will do no good to fuss and grumble at the "present shock" our young are throwing at us. Oh, we might grumble a bit; but when it is all said and done, we must buckle down and start meeting their *essential* needs.

## I. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Whether we are prepared or not, whether we like it or not, the present-future is sure to thrust upon us at least four major problems. Problems that need resolutions today.

### A. COLORED GLASSES (The Philosophical Outlook)

It is not because they are different; but rather because their *culture is moving*, at this particular juncture of history,

midway between a commonly accepted set of assumptions, which time has eroded from beneath our feet, and in an emerging consensus, which is not yet well formed enough to provide the necessary sense of cohesiveness and purpose that a society needs if it is to continue to exist. They are different because their world is totally different from that in which their parents grew up.<sup>4</sup>

What two people see is often determined by the color of the glasses they wear. The young don't see the way the establishment does. Some call the separation between parent and child the "generation gap"; others call it the "communication gap." Many call it a "creditability gap"; but perhaps it is best understood as an "assumption gap." The young of today or "the alternate society" does not begin with the same assumptions that the older or settled establishment did. The youth today are more personalized (or existentialized) and anti-institutional than their parents. James A. Michener, in his Kent State investigation,<sup>5</sup> does an admirable job of delineating other differing assumptions from which the typical parent and child radiate. Another succinct delineation is made by Paul W. Pretzel. I have condensed his comparison below:

VALUES OF THE ESTABLISHED SOCIETY compared to  
the VALUES OF THE ALTERNATE SOCIETY

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Production</i> —work, duty, postpone pleasure                 | 5. Content—( asks "What"), facts                       |
| 2. <i>Achievement</i> —honors, degrees                              | 6. <i>Restraint</i> —safety, be careful, a lot to lose |
| 3. <i>Aggression</i> —duty, competition                             | 7. <i>Intellectual</i> —rational, logical, objective   |
| 4. <i>Time</i> —(Past present, future) life is a cumulative process |  |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Pleasure                                       | 5. Form-style (asks "How"),<br>flair, style, social maneuverability |
| 2. Experience—new feelings, encounters, taste all | 6. Risk—excitement, adventure,<br>"why not", try it                 |
| 3. Passivity—peace, love, gentleness              | 7. Mysticism—feelings, experience <sup>6</sup>                      |
| 4. Time—(present)                                 |   |

Hansel offers what he calls "ground rules" which call attention to the different sets of values or assumptions from which the two cultures operate while "playing" in the *same game* of life.

*Settled people's ground rules* (Establishment)

1. The purpose of life is to achieve success and security.
2. Success is measured by position, salary, and possessions.
3. Education is that which equips people to become successful.
4. The way to achieve success is to work hard.
5. All things are logical and operate according to predictable principles.
6. Change is a threat to security and stability.
7. Religion is the belief that "out there" is a God who wants us to obey Him.

*Searching person's ground rules* (Alternate Society of Youth)

1. The purpose of life is unclear.
2. Success is impossible to measure except on a purely personal basis.
3. Education is an ongoing experience of discovery.
4. Logic is of limited value since we do not live in an orderly world.
5. Religion is any set of values that motivates and gives one a sense of commitment.
6. Change is inevitable and desirable; it is everybody's responsibility.<sup>7</sup>

What can a parent do when a child is truly "hung up" with these alternate values? They can argue a lot, fuss, and fight until everyone is frustrated, or (in the eyes of the youth) the parents can "open up," or (in the eyes of the parents) the youth can "grow up," or the child can "give up" and leave home. Now none of these seem to fit the Christian solution. Why not allow Christ to mold a solid truth between the two value systems, for surely there are good values on both sides of this thorny problem. It will not be easy. Usually, the molding process of Christ begins with self-denial.

A former student body president at Stanford University said: "At the heart of the student's problem is his lack of *meaning* for living." The alternate society seems to have goals, but no basic unchanging conviction that they are proceeding in the right direction.

Other children of ours have neither goals nor values. They simply drop out (or under). Their problem is even more serious. Apathy is worse than hate, harder to overcome, and more difficult to instruct. (The person who hates at least has convictions). Somehow we must devise better methods for Christ's words to penetrate their shield.

We live in an age when a thousand sirens beckon for the ears and the minds of our children. It is not enough to teach them a code of ethics. It is not enough to teach them a few rote prayers. Our homes must be so filled with the presence of Jesus that they encounter Him at every turn, come to know Him and love Him as effortlessly as they come to know their parents. In such a setting, Jesus can engage their loyalty and fire their imagination. And this is the only antidote to the powers of darkness and corruption which are loose in the world today. The time is past when parents can give their children a pleasant surface-coating of



religion. Our children are either going to be filled with Jesus and excited about Him, or filled with sin and excited about it.<sup>8</sup>

## B. AN UNSTABLE ENVIRONMENT (The Sociological Outlook)

A second problem of the present-future culture of our children is the unstable nature of our culture. Our children are living in a transitory world of temporariness and impermanence.

### Mobile Homes.

The children in one of every five families help Mommy and Daddy move across county lines every year. It is not strange to hear of a family moving fifteen times in less than fifteen years. One psychologist has even proposed "modular families." In this plan, he proposed that the company not only supply the moving executive a new house, but a new home as well. Allowing his old wife and family to remain in the same city, the company provides the executive with a new house complete with a new wife and children in the new location.

### Instant Everything.

Beginning with TV dinners the U.S. has introduced instant potatoes, short order foods, autos, marriages, and garbage. Instant everything has even boiled over into religion. Instant religion is usually hatched in a one hour slam-bang Sunday morning service where "you had better be finished in the one hour or we miss the football game."

Due in part to TV and to permissive rearing, the modern parent has also provided instant gratification to his children.

With this comes the “I-got-to-have-it-now” attitude. The alternate culture doesn’t care to wait. Patience is an *establishment* virtue. Drugs also supply the youth culture with instant gratification. It’s a “now” generation.

#### Knowledge.

In an unstable culture even knowledge is not static. Scientific works are outdated almost from the day they are printed. Youth asks: why learn all of the minutia of today’s education if tomorrow it will no longer be believed or practiced?

#### Stress.

The twentieth century man is bombarded from morning to night by scores of media to pressure him to buy this, invest in that, appreciate, give, become, join, learn, attend; and if one doesn’t participate in a fair number of these good endeavors, he is encouraged at least to develop a fair sized guilt feeling for *not* doing so. In this overstimulated and overexposed society, there is never a way to catch up or even break even. Who can possibly keep up with books coming off the press at almost one thousand new titles *a day*? This is to say nothing of the daily tensions that build up in every member of the family through school, job, church and home pressures.

#### The Psychology of More.

We have developed the general unquestioned belief that things are not good unless they are growing. It makes little difference whether it is Wall Street, the automobile industry, unions, or the chamber of commerce. The mark of success is determined by the growth factor: is it growing, getting bigger, making more sales or money? This insidious disease can also infect the home. Even our children get infected: “I

got three more A's than you did." Children pick up the models of their parents all too quickly.<sup>9</sup>

#### Family Living and Marriage.

There are profound changes in family life. Birth control pills have already produced certain changes in the sexual relationships in families throughout the country.

In the future there will be many different kinds of families, many more childless families; and couples capable of having children will choose to adopt instead. Single men and women are now allowed to adopt children; and more children born out of wedlock are kept and raised by their mothers, who choose never to be married.

Scripturally, there is no alternative to monogamy; but practically all the world is full of those who practice otherwise. Our children are rubbing shoulders with all kinds of alternative pressures we must resist.

*Progressive monogamy* is perhaps the most practiced alternative to monogamy. These are "chewing gum" marriages in which one "chews" all the sweetness out of one "stick," then acquires another, and so on until he feels that he might not be able to acquire another "sweet stick," so he "sticks" with the last one. This is basically what is happening with the multi-married and divorced.

Margaret Mead speaks in behalf of the *two step marriage*. The first marriage helps get one through the college years and the second is for the more mature role of child bearing. *Group marriage* is perhaps the least practiced and quickest to fail. The *commune* is another alternative; the Jewish Kibbutz have modeled this role for a number of years. Of more recent

vintage is the “hippie” style marriages. Some are *renewable contracts*. Every few years the contract expires and the marriage vow can either be renewed or canceled. Another modern day alternative to Biblical monogamy is the “*I’m-married-to-you-til-I-cease-to-love-you*” marriage. At any time one partner declares he or she is no longer in love, the marriage is dissolved. Then there is the *no-marriage-at-all* marriage. This is the practice on many university campuses. Even *polygamy* is becoming more bold in our new culture, to say nothing about the publicity given to legal *homosexual marriages*. True, these unscriptural variations of marital life style have always existed in America, but never in such numbers and never with such unashamed boldness. It *can* and *is* having its effect on our children. I say this, not to cause us to isolate our children from the world, but to arouse in us the deep and urgent need to inoculate them against the wiles of the evil one and to develop within our children the power to radiate the light of Christ—the best defense against infection.

#### The World Moving In (Urbanization).

In an unstable culture you maximize pressures and riots by condensing the populace. Even rats develop neurotic tendencies when overcrowded. Millions of stressed peoples jammed together in sweltering ghettos is no way to solve man’s problems. Paradoxically, overcrowding tends to promote isolation; not socialization. The rural farmer generally knew and appreciated his neighbor five miles up the road. But the urban dweller knows the man who delivers his milk as the “milkman,” and the man who sells him shoes as “shoe salesman.” The twentieth century man’s contact with others is short and impersonal; he knows almost nothing about those who live and work around him.

Some big business today discourages lasting friendships:

“A wife can be downright dangerous if she insists on keeping close friendships with the wives of her husband’s subordinates. Her friendships will rub off on him, color his judgment about the people under him, jeopardize his job.”<sup>10</sup>

The most important component of the personalities of successful business executives, according to sociologist Lloyd Warner, “is that, their deep emotional identifications with their families of birth being dissolved, they no longer are closely intermeshed with the past . . . They are people who have literally and spiritually left home . . . They can relate and disrelate themselves to others easily.”<sup>11</sup>

#### New Approaches to Child Rearing.

Margaret Mead speaks of three approaches to child rearing. The first she terms the “post-figurative” approach in which parents rear their children like their parents reared them. The second she refers to as the “co-figurative” approach in which the parents and children work together in rearing the children. The first approach, she feels, is past, and we are presently following the second approach. The third approach, Dr. Mead feels, is the one we are rapidly moving toward. In this approach, which she terms the “pre-figurative,” the children basically rear themselves. The reasoning behind this is based on the fact that no parent has ever faced the newness of a society such as the youth presently live in; therefore, the parents have no right to legislate. Toffler almost agrees with her analysis when he says: “In the past, older people were able to give their children reasonably good advice on the future, because the future almost always resembled the past. Now we face a future that will not resemble either present or past. Both generations are ‘all shook up.’”<sup>12</sup>

## C. NEW BIOLOGICAL REVELATIONS

The third factor youth faces in the present-future relates to new biological revelations. Not long ago a married woman with two children asked me point blank: "Is it wrong to get an abortion?" She continued: "I don't want *your* ideas or thoughts; I must submit the papers by tomorrow. If it is not wrong, absolutely sinful, I am going to have an abortion."

Looming on the horizon now are biological techniques which could revolutionize reproduction and even make it possible for embryos to be raised outside the body. Parents may be able to buy an embryo twenty years from now in an embryo supermarket. We may soon produce carbon copies of ourselves or 10,000 carbon copies of ourselves. The prediction is that we will not only be able to pick out the hair color and the I.Q., but even breed whole new races of blue or green people in addition to the standard shades of brown. We may be able to produce babies with supernormal hearing and vision, super-athletes and super-brains. But do we want it? Can we control it? *Who* would control it? We are playing with H-bomb potential. The new technologies can do incredible good or permanent damage. Now, more than ever, we must begin to think in terms of responsible techniques. What better institution can assist us in understanding responsibility than the church?

Modern biological science has presented us with scores of decisions for the future. What is a Biblical view of cloning, sex manipulation, embryo implants, babytoriums, multi-people? Each problem has its own theological and psychological implications. The investigations in this field are so new and varied and controversial we can not do justice to the topic to discuss it at this point. Sufficient to say, the

Christian home of the future must not only recognize the problems arising from it, but must begin now to prepare scriptural responses. What are you going to teach your daughter about abortion? What IS the Biblical position on these matters?

## II POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Having touched on three major present-future problems: the Philosophical, Cultural, and Biological; what possible suggestions do we have to offer in order to counter such forces?

### A. For the Home

We could make a long list of things we can do: spend time together, hunting, camping, have family devotionals and traditions, develop the ingredients of love, acceptance, discipline, leadership, music, nature study, etc. These are all good, but I want to capitalize in principles tonight. Two principles that will, I believe, set the stage for all specificities.

Live deliberately.

First, use your time wisely. Don't let time use you. Live as deliberately as God's day is deliberate. God's sun doesn't pop up over the horizon and shout "Good Morning! Everybody get up and get after it! You are already late." No, there is always a dawn that God's other creatures use and love, and there is always a twilight or dusk before night. God's other creatures stay tuned to God's *natural* wave length, but we somehow have circumvented this with "our?" electricity. God made a day to flow evenly and beautifully from dawn to dusk, but man has gone God one better and divided His day into twenty-four segments and these seg-

ments into sixty more and these smaller segments into sixty even smaller segments. We tune to segmented time. It usually does *not* flow; it goes Whirr, Pop, hummmmmmm, Ring-Ring-Ring-, Buzz, Growl. There is not much rhythm in our system. We have a schedule that too often becomes our daily god. We get up by it, go to work by it, stop by it without any awareness of a full moon or autumn. We have surrounded ourselves almost completely with concrete, steel, and plastics. Rain and autumn leaves are headaches. Spring just means hay fever. Children quickly learn and practice the same ritual they see their parents practice. Possibly, we need to learn again the music and rhythm of God's natural world as well as the will in His Word; then we can truly know the "joy of our Salvation" and so will our children.

Live purposefully.

William James once said: "Lives based on *having* are less free than lives based either on *doing* or *being*. Actively being a child of God is purposefully living. A high percentage of those who need psychological assistance are people who have no meanings or purposes for living. Viktor Frankl characterizes our modern culture as existing in an existential vacuum. God has planned and given to mankind not only the cure for its ills, but the highest purpose for living. Live purposefully. Live for Jesus!

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I that live but Christ that liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live in the Faith; that faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me. Gal. 2:20

What is needed is the linking of the individual to something which can not be shaken. "Wherefore, receiving a *kingdom*



*that cannot be shaken*, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well pleasing to God” (Heb. 12:28).

When we speak of purposes we speak of those things which we hold most dear, our values. Have you ever thought about what you truly value as against what you *say* you value? Here is a quick exercise to help you appraise your values. Think of something you really value. Now following are some questions to help you assess how *much* you value whatever you may have selected. Are you acting upon it, not just talking about it? Is it something you affirm in public? Is it a part of your total life pattern? Did you freely choose that particular value being aware of other alternatives? Do you try to promote that value? Do you “nag” others about it? Is it something which has exerted a lasting influence on you? Is it something that you have maintained even in the face of cost and sacrifice? If you answer *yes* to all of these questions you can legitimately say you truly value whatever area of life you choose to investigate. Children do not have to be taught your values. They can sense them—*if you really hold them!*

#### B. For the Church.

How can the church contribute? What can the collective body do? What new or different emphases can we make?

An authoritative proclamation.

The Bible furnishes man “completely unto every good work.”<sup>13</sup> We need not men to *defend* the Bible, it is more than adequate to that task. We need fearless men to *proclaim* the word that all the world might see its glory and power.

More specifically, if we are to keep the Christian home powerful and influential we must be emphatic about Biblical teaching on marriage. Both Christ and the apostles enunciate

clearly the ingredients of marriage and the qualities that sustain a marriage!<sup>14</sup> Because the stability of the home depends to a large degree upon the attitudes of those getting married, it is imperative that we teach clearly the standard of God, never lowering it, no matter what the world tolerates.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, sitting in a Nazi prison cell, once wrote a wedding sermon for a niece who was about to be married. In it he stresses the Biblical dignity and power of marriage:

“Marriage is more than your love for each other. It has a higher dignity and power, for it is God’s holy ordinance, through which he wills to perpetuate the human race till the end of time. In your love you see only your two selves in the world; but in marriage you are a link in the chain of the generations which God causes to come and to pass away to his glory, and calls into his kingdom. In your love you see only the heaven of your happiness, but in marriage you are placed at a post of responsibility towards the world and mankind. Your love is your own private possession, but marriage is more than something personal—it is a status, an office.”<sup>15</sup>

A fresh awareness of change.

We can learn to change our direction as often as needed to meet the needs of the youth wherever they may point, and they may be pointing a different direction tomorrow. We can do this *and* remain Biblically sound. Change usually comes about in one of three ways: a) drift b) defiance or c) decision. It is wisest to change by decision. We can change scores of things like our services, any human or congregation tradition, and our church building concepts as quickly as the local preacher changed from a white to a multi-colored shirt—*if we want to!* Things are changing *faster* than they did

five years ago; and the church should learn to change more quickly too. The subject of the scripturalness of long hair is long past for most teen-agers. They are no more interested in that subject today than they are in premillennialism. It's an issue they have long resolved. We need to be answering the questions they *are* asking. Strangely, they are raising with great persistence the carnal war question, a question we thought we had solved twenty years ago. They are open about their interest in the operation of the Holy Spirit in their lives. It is unfair not to openly and lovingly investigate the scriptures with *their* questions in hand. They are asking tantalizing questions: How right is it to hoard money or things? Can I be *absolutely* honest and sell for the average American business firm? Do preachers really covet the "big" pulpits? Why should I become a pulpit preacher when the world isn't "going to church" anymore? How many souls have been baptized in your church building in the last month? How many poor people have you assisted getting jobs? Are all races really welcomed to your fellowship? If qualified, could they ever become elders there? Are all people not members of a church which has "church of Christ" on its building going to be lost? These are not easy questions to answer, but these *are* some of the questions they *are* asking and they are touching on every big question in the Brotherhood: race, benevolence, carnal war, evangelism, fellowship, Holy Spirit, and materialism. Our children are forcing us with these questions to reinvestigate the scriptures with them—How wonderful! Not until they manifest a bitter, sour attitude do we have a right to criticize them for these questions.

A new awareness of mission.

We need to examine again the purpose for the existence of the church. In Ephesians 4:12 Paul emphasizes the

purposes of the church: to perfect the saints, to minister, and to build up the body of Christ. These purposes must ever be kept before us. To be effective in the home and in the church we must continually strip ourselves to self-denial and build up the body of Christ through evangelization. Nothing can live long feeding on itself. The great commission in the home and in the church is its life line.

Renewed warmth and openness.

Cold and stereotyped services neither parallel our present culture or the New Testament church. Confession was open; secret confession of public sins belongs more to the Catholic church than the New Testament church. The *warmth* of a holy kiss, the *tenderness* of a foot washing, and the *concern* of laying on holy hands is still needed in the body of the redeemed. The "rejoicing with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep"<sup>16</sup> has twentieth century application. The shepherds and evangelists should become "competent to counsel."<sup>17</sup> Even the more difficult human problems respond to the love of Jesus. The church in the first century actually restored, through the power of applied blood, fornicators, idolaters, homosexuals, thieves, revilers and drunkards.<sup>18</sup> We need communities of faith and love where people are cared for deeply. The church needs to move with boldness into this area, to take responsibility for the emotionally disturbed, and to raise up small groups whose members are willing to learn to love and care deeply for one another. One eldership with over four hundred to shepherd has called on every family in the congregation to offer their assistance.

A fresh approach to education.

We might consider a common curriculum for the entire congregation in order to help home Bible study. In this way a

family can have one study period at home to prepare all members of the family for Bible class. We must recognize the essential need to restore the home as the basic educational unit!<sup>19</sup> The Sunday school can become a hindrance to some families if they operate under the false belief that they are getting their Bible study at church. We must face the fact that Sunday school has not and cannot fulfill the spiritual needs of our children.

We might also consider smaller congregations with mutual ministries or larger congregations that frequently divide into a number of interpersonal groups where Christians can practice experiential Christianity. In this way they can share personally their mutual woes. Enthusiasm is generated by dialogue. The lecture or sermon presentation is still powerful, but it was not our Lord's only weapon. Perhaps His most effective weapon was the small group called the apostles. For months He worked with and trained them; even more diligently did He isolate Himself with them as He saw the cross looming near. It was through them that the world was "turned upside down."<sup>20</sup>

The cost of property and buildings will continue to soar, demanding in many parts of the country other alternatives such as congregations meeting in a theatre or public hall. One investigation proved a local theatre about ten times as economical as owning a church building, not counting the property. This may cause some congregations to return to the New Testament utilization of house churches. In the period of time the church grew the fastest there was not one single church building. The Bible classes in the future might be superseded or reinforced by home Bible study. Demanding that mothers and fathers do a better job of teaching, the Bible classes would move to more meaningful home Bible

classes for neighborhood children and adults, Christian and non-Christian. Through house churches the desperate need might be fulfilled to bring evangelism to the home, bring Bible study to the home, bring benevolence to the home and bring worship to the home. What about the collective church services? Just as in the New Testament days, the assembly of the saints is primarily for Christians and may last for an entire morning or all day. The number of worship services of the congregation might be reduced, but the time spent in worship could be extended and be considerably more varied. The number of services might not be as many, but the services rendered could be greatly extended, especially in the direction of the home.

### Conclusion

What can we say in conclusion when there is no conclusion to the changes that will continue to take place in this world and as a consequence in our homes?

First, some things do not change. God does not change, the truth of God does not change, and the nature of man does not change. The plan of God for man's salvation will not change.

Second, stress, pressure, even persecution has never destroyed the church. These trials only purify it.<sup>21</sup> The forces against Christianity serve to drive the faithful deeper into their families and further into the kingdom of God. Jesus had no fear of the Body diminishing through persecution; at times he even set up barriers to prevent the poorly motivated from becoming Christians.<sup>22</sup>

Thirdly, impermanence is no enemy and earthly fluctuations do not threaten because the Christian family (physical

and spiritual) is secure in God.<sup>23</sup> It is only this world that is unstable.

Fourthly, because of the stability of God in us we have hope. Our *message* is one of joy, peace and hope. No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in, the Christian has hope. We have no quibble with those who preach love and freedom. We do have the obligation, however, to challenge all to understand that neither love nor freedom is pure unless it is *responsible* to God.

Finally, because our lives are centered around Jesus, we rejoice at His return. We, like the early Christians, look forward joyfully, expectantly and hopefully to his return.<sup>24</sup> The Christian parent, Bible in hand, Christ in heart, has no fear of the future.

<sup>1</sup> "How to Cope with Future Shock," *Seventeen Magazine*. March, 1971. p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1970. p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Toffler, *Future Shock*. p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> Hansel, Robert. *Like Father, Like Son*. Seabury Press, 1969. p. 15

<sup>5</sup> Michener, James A. "Kent State—What Happened and Why" *Reader's Digest* March-April, 1971.

<sup>6</sup> Pretzel, Paul W. "Whales and Polar Bears," Los Angeles County Suicide Prevention Center.

<sup>7</sup> Hansel, *Like Father, Like Son*. pp. 42-43.

- <sup>8</sup> Christenson, Larry. *The Christian Family*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, p. 166.
- <sup>9</sup> Looft, William R. "The Psychology of More", *American Psychologist*. p. 561.
- <sup>10</sup> Toffler, *Future Shock*. p. 118.
- <sup>11</sup> Toffler, *Future Shock*. p. 117.
- <sup>12</sup> *Seventeen Magazine*. p. 178.
- <sup>13</sup> II Timothy 3:16, 17.
- <sup>14</sup> Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:3-12; I Corinthians 7.
- <sup>15</sup> Christenson, *The Christian Family*. pp. 9, 10.
- <sup>16</sup> Romans 12:15.
- <sup>17</sup> Romans 15:14. *Williams Translation*.
- <sup>18</sup> I Corinthians 6:9-11.
- <sup>19</sup> Deut. 6:6ff
- <sup>20</sup> Acts 17:6
- <sup>21</sup> I Peter 1:6, 7.
- <sup>22</sup> Luke 18:22.
- <sup>23</sup> I John 5:13.
- <sup>24</sup> Revelation 22:20.



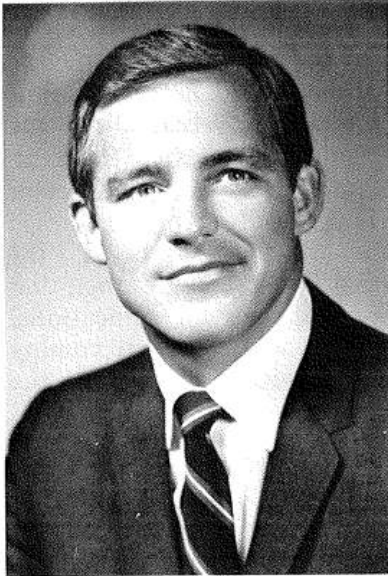
## CAN THE CHURCH SURVIVE?

BY WILLIAM S. BANOWSKY

William S. Banowsky, president of Pepperdine University, previously held posts as dean of students and chancellor of the university's new Malibu college. He first served on the faculty at Pepperdine in 1959.

Dr. Banowsky received his B.A. Degree from Lipscomb College in Tennessee, which he attended on a baseball scholarship. He earned his Master's Degree at the University of New Mexico, and his Ph.D. in Communications from the University of Southern California.

At the age of 35, Dr. Banowsky is well known as a lecturer and author as well as an educational administrator. He frequently appears on television as a contemporary social critic. His latest book, concerned with ethics, is *It's a Playboy World*.



His foreign speaking tours include trips to the Orient in 1960, to Western Europe in 1964, to the Middle East in 1966, to South America in 1968, and to Russia in 1969.

Dr. Banowsky has been appointed by the White House to the Technical Committee on Spiritual Well Being of the Conference on Aging and is a member of the Los Angeles County Judicial Reviews Commission. He was named one of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce's *Outstanding Young Men of America*.

He and his wife Gay reside with their four sons in the

President's Home on Pepperdine's Los Angeles Campus.

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“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:16-18).

Can the Church survive? This question, assigned by the Lectureship Committee as the title for this speech, is not the title I might have chosen. But I must concede that it is, at least, very timely. That is, its negativity is very much in keeping with the general mood of our times. Everywhere we are besieged with lamentations about the sickness and sins of our society. On all sides, questions are raised about the survival of our institutions. A plethora of pessimistic literature, from Paul Erlich's *The Population Bomb*, to Professor Reich's *The Greening of America*, provides the intellectual undergirding for what someone has rightly labeled “the doomsday lobby.” At a time when we are being warned that the American home, both our judicial and educational systems, and the United States government itself are coming apart at the seams, it is at least consistent to include the Church in the gloomy inventory.

In this present climate of despair we should remember that Satan's central strategy is the destruction of hope and optimism. And, as history clearly shows, one of the first fruits of despair is hedonism. The negative, despairing spirit is

prelude to the abandonment of fleshly living and gratification. As Paul told the Corinthians, if we begin to wonder whether the hope we have in Christ and the resurrection is vain, then "let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die" (I Corinthians 15:32). Sanballat and Tobiah knew that if they could sufficiently discourage the Jews, they could stop the rebuilding of the Jerusalem walls. Therefore, they ridiculed them and made fun of their work. "What are they building," Tobiah said. "If a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!" (Nehemiah 4:3).

Of course, the human tendency in every age is to believe that things are in bad shape, steadily growing worse, and that the future has never seemed so bleak before. It is my suspicion, however, that, historically speaking, things have often been worse before. Read the first chapter of Romans and keep in mind that the sordid scene provides the background for the period of greatest growth of the Church. Or read Isaiah, chapter fifty-nine. Does it sound like our day?

But if the question about the Church's survival is not entirely inappropriate, it does seem a bit presumptuous, because Christ, himself, has so clearly answered it. "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Church is of divine origin, and its survival is not predicated upon the performance of its members. The source of its strength is not human, but divine. The scriptures teach that the Church will suffer no mortal wound. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not the words of Christ (Matthew 24:35). God paid for the Church with the blood of his son. His reputation is caught up in its ultimate victory. He will not let it suffer defeat.

On the other hand, the writers of the Bible are realists.

No effort is ever made to soft-peddle the problems which Christians must face. Some, we are warned, will be put into prison, and some will die (Revelation 2:10). We make a terrible mistake to judge the progress of the church in terms of worldly success like wealth, respectability, and external peace. As Christians, we must remember that *all* genuine progress is against some resisting force. Fish swim against the resistance of water, birds and airplanes move against the resistance of air. We walk and run against the resistance of our atmosphere and its gravitational pull. The Christian gains his spiritual and moral muscle by facing adversity. Satan imagined he had defeated Christ when he put him to death, but the cross emerged as the symbol of victory for all mankind. We are surrounded with many problems, but God uses this same resistance to revive our faith and to develop the dynamic qualities of our lives (James 1:2-4).

The Bible message, then, is that God's people are under His protection so that no one can pluck the saved out of His hand (John 10:27-29). Especially throughout the book of Revelation, the picture of the Church is one of victory in difficult battles, until ultimately all enemies are vanquished and God's children assemble at the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19). The Church has already survived, over a period of 2,000 years, every conceivable form of human and Satanic opposition, including the bitter hostilities of various social and political climates, fierce and bloody persecution, and even the apathy and unfaithfulness of its members. The victory of the Church is certain. "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11).

To put the matter simply: The Church is eternal. God will do His work through the Church whether or not He does

it through us. *The real question is whether or not we are prepared to be the people God can use to accomplish His purposes through the Church.*

Despite the gloomy climate, it seems to me that there is much more that is positive for survival than is negative at this time. It is very likely that there are more Christians, more congregations, more preachers and elders and missionaries, in the world today than ever before in world history. As bearers of the good news, we certainly enjoy greater mobility and more effective means of communication than ever before.

Perhaps even more importantly, the manuscript evidence for an accurate translation of the Bible is probably richer today than at any time since the first century. The languages in which the Bible is not printed have dwindled down to a handful, and in most of these the scriptures are presently under translation. I tend to share the view of Thomas C. Oden.

“Our hypothesis is this: Never has there been a time in which it has been more exciting to be a person whose life has been shaped by the Christian memory in confronting the need and possibility of the world than today. Christianity is a world-wide community. Rare among human institutions, it has a two-millennium history. It is not going to disappear tomorrow. More Christians are alive today than at any previous time in the church’s history. More persons today receive the Sacraments and hear the preaching of the word than ever before. With improved means of historical research, we now know more about the Biblical witness and historical Christian tradition than any previous generation. It hardly seems fitting for us to waste away in despair over the alleged loneliness and isolation of the church from the secularizing process when the church itself has been one of the progenitors of secularization. In fact,

there is no room at all for despair for those who trust in God's future, and who expectantly await the future as the arena of the self-disclosure of the One who gives us life."<sup>1</sup>

To be quite specific, may I list several reasons why the signs have perhaps never been more favorable for a presentation of the undenominational message of salvation through Christ.

1. *The person of Christ* has become very much the center of the drama, movies and philosophical discussions of our times. The so-called Jesus movement, the recent picture of the Jesus-image on the cover of *Time* magazine, the popular rock-opera "Jesus Christ Superstar," the popularity of religious lyrics in the music of today, are all manifestations of a revival of interest in the person of Christ. Of course, not all of this is indicative of a genuine concern with following Christ, but it does suggest that the climate for presenting the claims of Christ is no longer hostile. The centrality of Christ in the message of Churches of Christ has a natural appeal in this day. To present only Christ and him crucified has real pulling power.

2. It is further encouraging that this *revival of interest in Christ is especially intense among young people*. As Hubert Locke correctly observes:

"It is today's students who are raising the religious questions of our time. Although we may curdle at the way

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<sup>1</sup> See Oden, Thomas C., *Beyond Revolution: A Response to the Underground Church*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 25.

in which some of them ask the questions, and get turned off by the choice of language students use to frame their queries, we nevertheless miss what's happening in large measure on today's campuses if we do not hear students asking some profound, probing, indelicate but extremely pertinent questions about the structure, nature, purpose and direction of American society in the second half of the 20th Century."<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly, the bankruptcy of liberalism generally and the young peoples' instinctive awareness that materialism is unfulfilling, has created an atmosphere in which spiritual questions can be raised with fresh interest. Young people have witnessed disaster in the lives of their parents with broken homes, emotional illnesses, alcoholism, and all the rest. Therefore, what would at first appear as a desperate situation really becomes an opportunity for God's Church to reach the searching young.

3. A third hopeful sign, which at first blush might appear otherwise, is *the general anti-establishment mood of the times*. What an ideal opportunity to present the plea of simple, New Testament Christianity. Even among ecclesiastical bureaucrats, where one would least expect to find it, the "institutional-establishment church" has become a hiss and a by-word. The recent vital movements in religion have been in the underground groups, house churches, interdenominational approaches, mystical and emotional appeals. But little

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<sup>2</sup> See Locke, Hubert G., "University Cities and the City of God: Looking Toward the Year 2000," in Minneman, Charles E., *Students Religion and the Contemporary University*, (Ypsilanti, Michigan: Eastern Michigan University Press, 1970), p. 181.

of the scathing criticisms which have been aimed at the existing order pertains to the Church of the New Testament. Rather, the attacks have been against such things as the hierarchies who pontificate from ivory towers, the dictation of the worship through archaic liturgies, the priestly control which invests all leadership in the hands of specialists, the emphasis on the holiness of the building. The whole assault misses completely the heart of the loosely structured, member-centered congregations of the Churches of Christ. In a day in which it has become a handicap to appear elaborately organized, we come off looking pretty good.

4. Closely related to this development, is *the move in all of government*, including the religious world, *toward decentralization*. The idea of a central power, built around a bishop, or president, or secretary, or pope is not presently popular. For instance, religious workers in foreign mission fields are held increasingly suspect if they answer ultimately to the control of a central figure or headquarters outside the country.

Recently, the Catholic theological faculty at Germany's Tübingen University published a book titled, *Bishops and People*. It argues forcefully for a return to the scriptural pattern of having the bishops elected by the people, suggesting a limited tenure of no more than eight years.

“Of course our survey is aimed primarily at historical findings, but these reveal a theological understanding in which the appointment of the bishops lies with the responsibility of the congregation. In a milieu in which classical democracy had become foreign, the young church practiced completely democratic procedures, which obvi-



ously were compatible with the principle of hierarchy.”<sup>3</sup>

At another point in the book, the language is even more pointed. “Despite all differentiation of the structures of office, it is clear that in the primitive congregation the ecclesiastical office remained essentially oriented to the congregation.”<sup>4</sup>

After lamenting the power and the titles that leaders in the Catholic Church have taken to themselves through the ages, Hans Kung, one of the contributors to the book, states:

“For while in the New Testament all worldly honorary titles are strictly shunned in connection with bearers of office, they are in fact given to the entire believing people, which is designated ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation’ (I Peter 2:9), and made ‘a line of Kings and priests, to serve our God and to rule the world’ (Revelation 5:10).”<sup>5</sup>

In short, the force of much recent thinking in the religious world is toward the congregational autonomy which has always been a hallmark with the Churches of Christ.

5. In much the same vein, creeds and man-made laws are

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<sup>3</sup> See Stockmeier, Peter, “Congregation and Episcopal Office in the Ancient Church,” in *Bishops and People*, written by members of the Catholic Theological faculty of Tübingen University, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, article by Kung, Hans, “Participation of the Laity,” p. 93.

less and less in favor and there is *a renewed interest in what the Bible says*. In fact, there seems to be a revival of Biblical fundamentalism, a desire to know exactly what Christ said, and what the early Christians thought and taught. Accordingly, a church whose only creed is Christ and whose message is truly biblical can avoid the trap of being drowned with a decaying culture.

It is God's purpose for the Church to always transcend culture and, in a very real sense, to provide a judgment against it. In this way, the Church exists within all societies, making such cultural adaptations as the order of worship, building appearance, hours of assembly, programs of community work and involvement. But in its great central truths, the Church must live in constant tension with all worldly societies, and must produce change in line with Biblical truth.

There is a very real sense in which the survival of the Church, in every age and in every culture, is assured not only because of what its members believe but equally as much because of what they are *not* required to believe. Its great flexibility and adaptability, which results from the absence of rigid forms and creeds, keeps its hands free to feature the simple, central truths of the sovereignty of God and the deity of Christ. As the young people so clearly see, it is when the Church gets itself obligated to deteriorating cultural forms that it becomes isolated from the emerging forms. And when it gets itself in bondage to senile subcultures, it finds itself alienated from emerging subcultures.

6. Next must be mentioned *the ecumenical spirit abroad in the land*, which provides a new hearing for our historic emphasis on the unity of the Church. The legitimacy of denominational divisions is being deeply questioned, not only

by ecclesiastics, but by the man on the street as well. As one recent book puts it:

“We are now experiencing the collapse of denominational identities. We may have loved our denominations, and felt a tug of loyalty to them, but that is beside the point now. We could not maintain these structures even if we tried. The denominational structures are simply on their way out. History can no longer tolerate a divided church. The structures are cracking and crumbling.”<sup>6</sup>

7. Finally, even the tremendous interest in personal freedom throughout the world, provides an opportunity for the Church. Nothing is more appealing to the modern mind than our historic claims of personal liberty: a fellowship in which each is encouraged to examine and study the Bible for himself; where each believer establishes his own personal relationship with God through Christ; where none has the right to legislate or tell others what they must think. It is a tremendous advantage that individual Christians are not bound by the Church to some party line position regarding questions like birth control, abortion, and the pros and cons of a Christian's participation in war. Such questions have lately arisen to rend other more rigidly structured communions.

None of us would trade places with any other people who lived during some other more placid time or in some other more peaceful place. Thank God who matched us with

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<sup>6</sup> See Oden, Thomas C., *Beyond Revolution: A Response to the Underground Church*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), pp. 34-35.

this hour. The times are challenging, but they may also be useful for not only the survival, but perhaps also for the most dramatic advances in the history of the simple New Testament Church. The real question does not concern the survival of God's Church, but whether we will rise to meet the opportunities God is giving to His people. If God be for us, who can be against us?

“Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.”

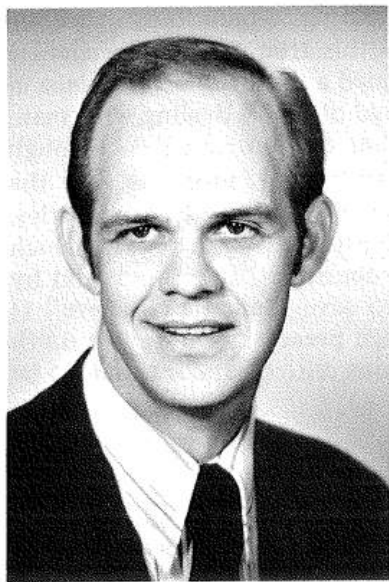
# PANELS



## PROFESSIONALISM IN THE MINISTRY

### JAY LOCKHART

- BIRTH** Younger of two sons born to Mr. and Mrs. J. Russell Lockhart, February 3, 1938, at Parkersburg, West Virginia.
- EDUCATION** Graduate of Parkersburg High School, 1956, Freed-Hardeman College, 1958, David Lipscomb College, 1961, M.A. Degree Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1969.
- FAMILY** Married Arlene Carter, September 9, 1958. Three children—Terry Lynn, November 21, 1962, Tammy Leigh, November 21, 1962, Jay Paul, February 26, 1965.



#### PREACHING

Began in Parkersburg, West Virginia, 1956. Full time work with Green Plain church, Hazel, Kentucky, 1961-63, Seventh & Poplar church, Murray, Kentucky, 1963-67, Glenwood church, Tyler, Tex-

OTHER SPEAKING  
ENGAGEMENTS

as, 1967- . Conducts about eight meetings a year. Speaks on thirty minute weekly television program in Tyler, "Good News For Today." Speaker in Campaigns abroad: Loughborough, England, 1969, 1970; Edmonton, Canada, 1970, 1971.

Has spoken before numerous civic, school, and state organizations in several states, and has appeared on various college lectureships.

## INTRODUCTION

Preaching! There is something wonderfully thrilling about that word! Especially is this true when we recognize that preaching has always occupied a most important place in God's plan for man. In every age of God's dealing with man, beginning with Noah, a preacher of righteousness, through the preaching of the Old Testament prophets, to the preaching of John the baptizer, to Jesus and the apostles, preaching is paramount in the Scriptures. In the age of which we are a part, the apostle Paul declared, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21 KJV). Although preaching in the twentieth century is under attack by various critics,<sup>1</sup> it continues to be

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of criticism of preaching in this century, see Frank Pack and Prentice Meador, Jr., *Preaching to Modern Man* (Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1969), pp. 2, 3.



the world's greatest work so that the Bible says, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" (Romans 10:15 RSV).

### THE SCRIPTURES SPEAK

As one studies the Scriptures, it becomes obvious that God has much to say about preaching. The Bible speaks to three important questions in regard to preaching which will be examined in this paper: (1) What is preaching? (2) What is the message of New Testament preaching? (3) What about preachers being supported by and working on a full time basis with a local congregation?

(1) *What is preaching?* The two most common New Testament words for preaching are *euaggelizō*, which means, "to bring good news, to announce glad tidings,"<sup>2</sup> and *kerusso*, meaning, "to proclaim to persons one whom they are to become acquainted with in order to learn what they ought to do."<sup>3</sup> If the message presented is not good news and does not inform one as to how he may please Christ, it is not preaching in the New Testament sense. Preaching, then, should bring the hearer to a direct confrontation with God. "When the crowd (on Pentecost—JPL) heard the message, they were 'cut to the heart.' Why? Not because of any irresistible logic or persuasive oratory on the part of Peter,

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Thayer, *A Greek-Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, reprinted 1965), p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> Thayer, *Ibid.*, p. 346.

but because they had been confronted . . . by God Himself."<sup>4</sup>

(2) *What is the message of New Testament preaching?* In Paul's instruction to Timothy concerning preaching, he said, "Preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). As he defended the preaching he had done in Ephesus, the apostle affirmed that he had declared "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). In two of his epistles, Paul said he had fully preached the gospel (Romans 15:19; Colossians 1:25 NEB). The term for "word" in II Timothy 4:2 is *logos* and means, "the doctrine concerning the attainment through Christ of salvation in the Kingdom of God."<sup>5</sup> The word translated "counsel" in Acts 20:27 is *boule* and is defined as "counsel, purpose . . . especially of the purpose of God respecting the salvation of men through Christ . . . All the content of the divine plan."<sup>6</sup> Negatively, then, the message of preaching is not the precepts or traditions or the words of man's wisdom (Mark 7:6-8; I Corinthians 2:1-5). Positively, the message is to be a full exposition of God's revealed truth, the Scriptures. Abraham de Viers wrote,

When preaching is no longer required to be biblical, that is, based upon exposition of the authoritative Word of God—it soon degenerates into a potpourri of discourses on current events, the arts, new books, and countless other matters.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), p. 154.

<sup>5</sup> Thayer, *Ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>6</sup> Thayer, *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 105.

<sup>7</sup> Abraham de Viers, "Ignorant Preachers," *Christianity Today* (January 2, 1970) p. 8.

To many in our times, "it is what men say—not what God says—that is now taken to be theologically relevant or interesting."<sup>8</sup> "This kind of preaching becomes passe as quickly as today's newspaper, while preaching that is biblical is timeless."<sup>9</sup>

Men may speak of "the new day," the "changing times," and the "enlightened age," but the world has not outgrown the need for simple gospel preaching . . . It is still "God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). It is not the mere act of preaching that saves. If this were true, it would not matter so much what is preached. But this is not true. It is the thing preached that saves. Unless the gospel is preached faithfully, the preaching will not save. It may entertain . . . but it will not save.<sup>10</sup>

Since man's great need is to be saved from sin and to be built up in the faith, and inasmuch as the gospel will save those lost in sin (I Corinthians 15:1, 2) and build up, or edify, the saved (Acts 20:32), the Word of God will always be relevant.

Today much emphasis has been given to "relevancy in preaching and communicating the gospel." However, there must be something to make relevant and something worthwhile to communicate. A wealth of technique cannot

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<sup>8</sup> Milton Hunnex, *Christianity Today* (January 15, 1971).

<sup>9</sup> Abraham deViers, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> B. C. Goodpasture, "Preaching the Gospel," *Gospel Advocate*, CVIII (September 1, 1966), p. 546.

compensate for a poverty of content. The Bible is relevant now.<sup>11</sup>

The exposition of the word of God is bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a compass to the tempest-tossed sailor on life's sea, a staff to the weary traveler, and light to men in darkness. This kind of preaching will inform the hearer of his responsibility, convince him of truth and error, stimulate him to action and persuade him to obey the will of the Lord as God's truth is applied to his specific needs. May we emphasize, preaching must be an exposition of God's word applied to the needs of the hearer.

Prentice Meador, Jr. has said,

The neglect of Biblical preaching weakens the Christian ministry because it violates the Biblical image of preaching. *The need, consequently, is for pulpits which are first century in content and twentieth century in communication.*<sup>12</sup>

“There is, then, this crucial distinction between the theme, which never changes, and the way that theme is presented”<sup>13</sup> which should allow the audience to see the unseen as it applies to the needs of today.

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<sup>11</sup> Tom Holland, *Sermon Design and Delivery* (Shreveport, La.: Gussie Lambert Publications, 1967, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Frank Pack and Prentice Meador, Jr., *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Frank Pack and Prentice Meador, Jr. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Frank Pack spoke of the preacher's responsibility to "preach the word" when he said,

If man, therefore, stands behind his pulpit only to give his personal opinions, his random ideas and speculation, he has no justification whatever for being there. He not only wastes the time of the people, but makes a travesty of what he is supposed to be doing. If he is there only to express his prejudices and give vent to some pet peeve, or promote some hobby he is riding, then he is desecrating what is his responsibility to offer as an act of worship <sup>14</sup>

During the 1919 Abilene Christian College Lectureship, Henry Speck, Sr., challenged young preachers to preach the oracles of God in these words:

Young preachers, make it a burning passion of your soul to be filled to the overflow with the words of this great message. Let your speech and your preaching consist not of the enticing words of men's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and power that man's faith may not be founded on the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.<sup>15</sup>

(3) *What about preachers being supported by and working on a full time basis with a local congregation?* God has ordained that those who preach the gospel may receive financial support from the brethren for their work. "In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the

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<sup>14</sup> Frank Pack and Prentice Meador, Jr., *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Speck, Sr., "The Preacher, His Task and Opportunity," *Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures* (Cincinnati, Ohio: F. L. Rowe, Publisher, 1919), p. 26.

gospel should get their living by the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:14 RSV). Again, “If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?” (I Corinthians 9:11 RSV). The preacher may travel extensively in proclaiming the gospel in many places or he may labor in one locality as he receives remuneration from the brethren. How long he works with a given congregation is not settled in Scripture. Paul stayed in one location from a few days to a few years during his ministry (Acts 19:10; 18:11; 13:1).<sup>16</sup>

### THE ADVANTAGES OF A FULL TIME PREACHER IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

While every Christian is a minister, every Christian is not a preacher in the biblical sense of the word. God has a special place in his economy for preachers. I & II Timothy and Titus were written to preachers. A man who is a preacher can fill a vital role in the local church.

First, the local preacher *ministers to the needs of people*—by ministering in the Word and in other acts of service—*on a full time basis*. He is free to devote much more time to these important matters than the man who must find his support in secular work. The congregation in which he works is saying, “You have special abilities in ministering to people’s needs. Devote your full time to this work and we will provide for your support.”

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<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of this point see Jack Meyer, *The Preacher and His Work* (Athens, Alabama: The C. E. I. Store, 1955), pp. 7-10.

Second, the full time preacher is a *specialist*. Usually he has received special training (perhaps in formal education which includes courses in speech, Bible, hermeneutics, homiletics, etc., or through experience, or both) that qualifies him to do his work in a better way than others, in most circumstances, could do it.

Third, the local preacher is a *thinker*. He gives much of his time in analyzing the mission of Christ's church in today's world and in seeking better methods of effectively fulfilling this mission. He then serves as a resource man for the church with which he works.

Fourth, the full time preacher has time to be a *diligent student* of the Word as he prepares to teach and preach God's will. And this is an absolute must if he is to be effective. Some will not pay the price of thorough preparation and this leads to frequent moves, non-Biblical and powerless speeches, ineffective ministries, and contempt for preaching.

## THE PROBLEM OF PROFESSIONALISM

While there are definite advantages in having a preacher devote his full time to working with a given congregation, there is also the very real danger of professionalism in the ministry. By professionalism we mean that the preacher may be hired to do the work of and for the congregation.

First, the preacher may come to occupy the position of a *denominational pastor*. He may thus do the work that the elders should do. Bill Banowsky quotes Paul Southern's warning that "good men in their enthusiasm to see the

church grow may assume dictatorial authority.”<sup>17</sup> He takes charge of the services, becomes the promoter, the public relations director, the business executive, the counselor, and the policy-maker for the congregation.

Banowsky quotes Guy N. Woods as saying,

It will not be seriously denied that there is an arrangement in operation in the church of Christ which bears suspicious similarity to the pastor system of the denominations. It is idle to deny this. Elders have, in many instances, employed an evangelist to feed the flock, and take the oversight thereof, to the utter neglect of the work themselves. It is not surprising that, where this is done, the elders are, too often, regarded as but mere figureheads, without authority and influence in the congregation.<sup>18</sup>

Second, the preacher may assume the *responsibilities that the members* of the local church should fulfill. A cartoon pictured two men in front of a church building with the caption: “Why should I get involved, Preacher: That’s what we pay you for.” This, no doubt, is the attitude of many of our people. Banowsky quotes James Willeford as he spoke to an Abilene Christian College Lectureship audience in saying,

“We must get away from looking upon the evangelist as “The Minister.” The members will not serve well if they live under the delusion that a hired specialist can be brought in to do their work for them.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> William S. Banowsky, *The Mirror of a Movement* (Dallas: Christian Publishing Company, 1965), p. 217.

<sup>18</sup> William S. Banowsky, *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>19</sup> William S. Banowsky, *Ibid.*, p. 218.



Third, the preacher may become a spiritual *cheerleader*. It becomes his job to sell every program of work to the congregation, to keep the attendance up, to make certain the money is coming in, and to assume the responsibility for converting the unsaved and for building up the church.

### THE RESULTS OF PROFESSIONALISM

As surely as professionalism enters into the preacher's work, certain tragic results will be forthcoming.

First, we lose sight of the *nature of the church*. The church is a body which can properly function and grow only "when each part is working properly" (Ephesians 4:16 RSV).

Second, the congregation develops a *spectator* complex. Worship services become times to watch the preacher perform, instead of vital periods of spiritual enrichment to hungry souls who are involved each day in fulfilling the church's mission in today's world. The spectator attends worship periods to be entertained, and leaves unchanged. If the entertainment is not to his liking, he may ask the elders to secure the services of another preacher.

Third, *abilities are buried* as the church members "let the preacher do it." Every member of Christ's body has gifts or abilities and is to use his gifts to render service" as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies: in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (I Peter 4:11 RSV). The ministry of the Lord's church is divided among all the members (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12).

Fourth, the members of the local congregation fail to see

themselves as active participants in *soul-winning* for Jesus (See John 15:1-6).

Fifth, the preacher *does not have ample time* to prepare for teaching and preaching The Word. He becomes "frustrated by a myriad of tasks he was never called by God to perform."<sup>20</sup>

Sixth, while there no doubt are preachers who like the professionalism of the ministry (they like the busy work but do not care for serious study and preparation for preaching and teaching), surely most do not and some are *leaving full time church work*.

#### A SUGGESTED SOLUTION

What can be done about this situation that plagues so many churches?

First, our people need to be better informed about what God expects of the preacher *and* of each member of the church. *Every Christian is a minister*.

Second, preachers must come to see that *their primary task is to preach*. They must be willing to pay the price of preparing for this work. Tom Holland suggests that a sermon is prepared when: (1) the subject is developed scripturally; (2) each scripture used is discussed and applied in light of the

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<sup>20</sup> Laurence O. Richards, *A New Face For the Church* (Grand Rapids; Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 37.

context; (3) the whole sermon plan is clearly in mind; (4) the sermon has been prayed about (Acts 6:4); (5) the preacher longs for the time to come when he can share the message with the audience.<sup>21</sup> This kind of preparation takes great blocks of time each week. Thorough preparation means that there will not be so much time left for many less important tasks than speaking for God. Preachers must pay this price.

Third, *elders must "elder" and allow the preacher to preach.* The preacher can do much to encourage elders in this respect by insisting that elders take the lead in worship services, teaching, counseling, et al.

Fourth, *every Christian* must see himself as a vital contributor to the numerical and spiritual growth of the congregation of which he is a part. The preacher then can become one who through *diligent study and clear insight* can help the Christian perform his task in a way that will be pleasing to God.

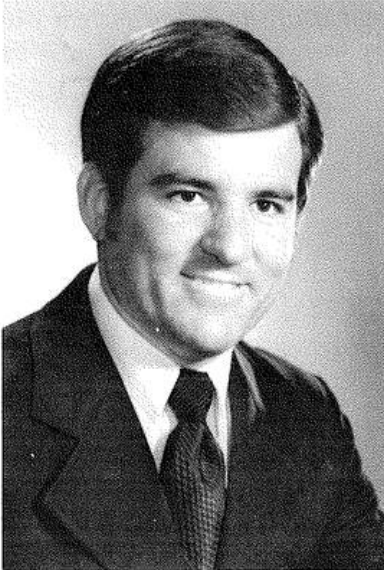
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<sup>21</sup> Holland, *Ibid.*, p. 13.

## EVERY CHRISTIAN A MINISTER

### GARY R. BEAUCHAMP

Gary was reared in Abilene, Texas. He has received both the BA and MS degrees from Abilene Christian College. He has also studied at Baylor University. He has been preaching for nine years, serving congregations in Ranger and Waco before moving to the Westbury Church in Houston, Texas. Gary has held over fifty gospel meetings in nine states and has appeared on four college lecture programs. Gary has been active in community affairs, having served as a past president of Rotary, past director of the Ranger and Waco Junior Chambers of Commerce, past Pony League President, past City Commissioner, past head of Community Development Council. He was nominated Outstanding Young Men of America Award in 1970. He received the "Fred Brown Memorial Award" as outstanding young speaker of Texas given by the Texas Jaycees in 1971. He was awarded the "Outstanding Speaker of America" award by the National Junior Chamber of



Commerce in the Summer of '71. Gary is married to the former Deanna Kirk. Deanna has been active as a writer of primary school materials, an active interpreter to the deaf and teaches a weekly ladies' class of over one hundred ladies. They have two children, Greg, 7, and Betsy, 4. He is the son of the Garvin Beauchamps of Abilene, Texas.

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While violently opposing the thought, we in the Church of our Lord have

become a people who worship and contribute to a clergy-centered church structure. Besides being flagrantly opposed to the scriptural organization of the Church, this one concept of modern religious thought has created wilted congregations, disenchanting young people, overworked elderships and apathetic members.

This old-fashioned idea is that religion is a professional matter. The emphasis is upon the church-clergy doing the work of the church from the church office in the church building. Deep religious convictions are what preachers have. If a man becomes deeply interested in a religious effort, or talks about "entering the ministry," we immediately assume that he has a professional stake in the religion business. Religious discussions are left to the minister, or referred to him with "I'll ask my preacher about that"; and religious meetings are held in the church house.

The ordinary member, of course, has his responsibilities; but they are of a minor nature. His main duties are merely to add himself to the listening congregation and to give some money to support the work of the ministers, missionaries, and material matters of the Church.

Obviously, there are many who enjoy this form of division of the labor in the religious organization; it is so much easier to sit in the balcony than to act on the stage. Life is far simpler if we are not required to participate. The ordinary member who leaves all major responsibility to the clergy is in a very comfortable position, really. He can tend to his business affairs with very little religious interruption. He can confidently leave to the preacher not only the duties of overseeing the office staff, the care of the building and grounds, the preaching and teaching responsibilities, but also

the visitation of new or out-of-duty members, personal work comforting the sick and the bereaved. He is then free to criticize, if things are not done well, and has an easy conscience because he has not failed in these important tasks of the Church.

However comfortable this balcony type of religion is, it is very out of date and conspicuously unscriptural. It portrays a grave misunderstanding of the concept of the Church and Christianity, and points to our lack of teaching and educating on the vital message—MINISTRY.

For the most part, early Christianity was a movement which did not differentiate between ministry and members. There was no example given in the New Testament of separate priesthoods. The distinction broke down on both sides. On what we would call the clergy side, it broke down because a man like Paul worked with his own hands. "For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God" (I Thess. 2:9). On the membership side, men and women worked daily "teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers" (Acts 2:42). "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Why? Not because they had a few brilliant preachers, but far more because the idea of a non-ministering Christian was rejected unanimously.

Note, if you will, the deep relationship between the membership and ministry. The New Testament term is one we rarely use in our religious vernacular—the word, "laity." In the New Testament the Greek word *laos* means "the people whom God has chosen for himself, selected as peculiarly his own." In other words, the Church is the

possessed people of God. Therefore, if we speak of the laity in the New Testament of laos, the people of God, we speak of the Church. (Matt. 2:6, Luke 1:68, Luke 7:16, Acts 15:14, Rom. 1:1, Acts 18:10, Heb. 4:9, I Pet. 2:9-10). As can be readily seen, the laity, laos, membership includes the clergy and the laymen—both being God's possessed people.

The implications of this are far-reaching. The biblical directives concerning the Church as God's people mean that the Church is

- called into being by God
- centered in Jesus Christ
- continued by the Holy Spirit.

The Church is God's creation—not man's—and it is a cross-section of people from every walk of life, engaged in a multitude of secular endeavors, who are called out—particularly as those who believe in and obey God. When we isolate the Church in concept, thought, and action to the work of the clergy we deny the staggering power that is waiting to explode on the world through the combined ministry of every Christian.

One of the most powerful, and overlooked, passages of the New Testament is I Peter 4:10 "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." This short passage sketches sharply the key features of ministry in Christ's Church. These features are that (1) each Christian has a gift, a special ability from God; (2) the abilities and ministries differ

(God's varied grace); (3) the abilities are to be used in service in the Church.

Given Paul's deep concern for the Lord's work, it would have been difficult, if not entirely impossible, for him to begin a new work in an unbelieving city like Corinth and then feel the sense of freedom to leave them "since my work in these places no longer needs my presence" (Rom. 15:22), except that Paul understood the nature of the Church. He understood that God had divinely supplied all that we need to grow as Christians through each other. Paul writes of this plan in several places.

I Corinthians 12-14 is one of these where Paul writes "Men have different gifts but it is the same Spirit who gives them." There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same God who is served. Each man is given his gift by the Spirit that he may use it for the common good. He repeats this in Romans:

"Through the grace of God we have different gifts. Just as you have many members in one physical body and these members differ in their functions, so we, though many in number, compose one body in Christ and are all members one of another. Through the grace of God we have different gifts. If your gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision. If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; if it is teaching, let us give all we have to teaching; and if our gift be the stimulation of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it. Let the man who is called to give, give freely; let the man who wields authority think of his responsibilities; and let the man who feels sympathetic for his fellows act cheerfully" (Rom. 12:4-8).

Paul knew that "the ministry" is thus divided among all



the members of the body of Christ. Each is given an ability to contribute, and each is to use it fully.

“No thought is less emphasized or even more distrusted in today’s church than the idea of “gifts” which every Christian employs in his or her Christian service. The New Testament teaches that every recipient of God’s grace also receives a “gift” of service or ministry by the experience of God’s grace in Jesus Christ (Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:1-15; I Pet. 4:7-11). Our concern for the miraculous “gifts” of healing and tongues has blinded us to the gifts of “ministry” that are the very reason for the church’s existence in the first place.”<sup>1</sup>

I don’t intend to go into a thorough discussion of spiritual gifts here, nor do I intend to try to convince anyone of my ideas about whether we should or should not expect to speak in tongues or heal. What should be important is that, whether such gifts are given by the Spirit today or not, everyone understands that every believer has some special ability from God. And that this ability is given to enable him to minister to others (I Cor. 12:7). The Bible says that God distributes to each of His’children a special ability (individually, as He wills). The particular gift or gifts we receive is dependent on His place for us in the Church, but each believer has a gift.

The passage in Romans on gifts gives a representative (and not in any way an exhaustive) listing of the kind of abilities that make up the ministry of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> John Allen Chalk, *Jesus’ Church*, (Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1969), p. 79.

“Each ability listed is one which is used interpersonally, socially. Our ability may be preaching, or stimulating the faith of others, or giving, or exercising authority, or simply feeling (and expressing) sympathy. Each of these abilities, and a myriad of others, are required to meet the complexity of human needs. Each will be needed by believers in relationship if the life of Christ in us, and our common life in Him, is to be nurtured and one which flourishes.”<sup>2</sup>

“God has arranged all the parts in the body, according to his design” (I Cor. 12:18). The fact that there are many parts but only one body is vital to the survival of the body. While it is only normal that we assign the greater importance to those parts of the body with obvious functions, it is true that those parts which demand less honor of function are the more essential to health.

In reality, the work of the ministry—the work of the body—belongs to the man in the pew, not exclusively the man in the pulpit, and it is the holy obligation of every member, wherever he is, whatever he is doing. What takes place inside the sanctuary on Sunday is the measure of what happens from Monday through Saturday, for it is during this period that Church members are infiltrating all of the structures of society. It is here that Christ’s mission in the world is either fulfilled or thwarted. We will never hire enough ministers or missionaries to evangelize the whole world, the entire laity is needed for that. No man’s gift is too small not to be vital in the work of the Lord. Each man is

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<sup>2</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *A New Face for the Church*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 100.

given his gift by the Spirit that he may use it for the common good.

One question may arise concerning the biblical concept of Ephesians 4 where God's gifts to the church seem to be men, not special abilities to all individuals to minister. Thus a "special class" of ministers seem to be introduced: apostles, preachers of the Gospel, etc. Certainly the gifts given to different individuals equip them for different roles in the church, and these gifted men are given to the church "that Christians might be properly equipped for their service." There is no conflict with the idea of a sharing of a ministry here, the minister performs a separate and necessary work, while the membership performs its functions, equally as necessary to the work.

The concept of every Christian a minister sounds exciting, but it also sounds confusing. How practical is it to expect a "mutual ministry" to be implemented in our churches? How might such a ministry be carried out? Several insights from Scripture suggest directions for us. At the same time, the particular style of our work is left quite open.

Dr. Paul M. Stevens said, "Nothing is more expensive than unused capacity. And nothing seems to have more of that than the churches of America. Great congregations of talented laymen, women who run clubs and direct political campaigns and lead in medical and other community-wide crusades, hundreds of brilliant, restless, available young people all going to waste."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Paul M. Stevens, *The Beam*, August, 1965, p. 3

This loss of talent does not have to exist. The false dichotomy of the sacred and the secular has been a devastating hindrance to Christian influence. We must abandon the spurious notion that the business of the Church is sacred, while the factory, or the shopkeeper downtown is secular. The illustration is given of our Lord, who worked at least half of His life as a carpenter, while His ministry lasted only three years. What would we say? That He spent 30 years of His life in a secular vocation and only 3 in sacred? The answer is painfully obvious. Everything he did was sacred.<sup>5</sup> Paul gave us divine direction, "Whatever you do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God."

Although the emphasis of the past ministry has been on the specific ministry found from the pulpit, the contemporary Church must realize that the greatest single ministry in which most men can engage is that which occurs in the pursuit of their regular employment. God may care more about factories and offices than about church buildings, because more people are in them more of the time. It matters very little how effective a man may be in teaching a class at church or in leading a prayer meeting, if he is not able to make the same kind of influence carry over to the people who work with him every day.

Obviously, if the tremendous need is found in the world, our ministers need to be those Christians whose gifts lead them into the world, able to serve where they see the need.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77

The first essential, of course, is the personal answer each one makes to Christ's call (Luke 9:27-62). This answer occurs in the form of surrender, which is the willingness to allow Christ to live in control of our lives (Gal. 2:20). This surrender is also an acceptance of Christ's ministry as our ministry (Phil. 1:21-24), accepting our role through the development of the gifts given to us by God.

But let's get down to specifics—how does each Christian perform a ministry?

We've already observed the most obvious—that of a witness for Jesus in our homes, on our blocks, on the job. It was the amazing fact that every Christian felt the responsibility of teaching others the Good News, that led to the daily conversions of the Early Church.

### THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

“Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another” (I Pet. 4:9).

The ministry found in the welcome of the home is often an underestimated one. The home may be the vestibule of heaven that draws another to Christ, gives rest to a weary traveler, or provides food for undernourished bodies and hearts.

Opening your home may be the key to a whole new ministry for you and your family. It may be as simple as inviting the newcomer to the community, or as involved as providing a home for an abandoned child. Our Lord reminds us that true religion is this, “That ye visit the fatherless and the widows,” and “visit” in that sense involves more than a

yearly “hello.” It implies seeing to their needs, physically, morally, spiritually. It may involve opening your home to provide a temporary shelter for them, or a permanent home life.

Francis A. Schaeffer offers vital thoughts regarding our 20th century hospitality. We are involved in the integration situation in our country—we discuss often the schooling situation, busing, housing. Religiously, many of us have been involved in striving for an integrated Church, breaking down the barriers that have produced “white” churches and “black” churches in the same community. I have seen white evangelists really thrilled when black evangelists get up to talk in our assemblies. How they were thrilled! That is nice, because there was a time when they were not so thrilled. Yet, in the past year, how many blacks have you fed at your dinner table? How many black Christians have felt at home in your home? And if you are a black Christian, it all cuts equally the other way: How many whites have you invited to your home in the last year? How many whites have eaten at your table? When this mutual hospitality occurs, then we can begin to talk, and churches can jump across this division as they should, but not before.

How many times in the past year have you risked having a drunk into your home? How in the world, then, can you talk about compassion and about community, about the church’s job in the inner city?

“How many times have you risked an unantiseptic situation by having a girl who might easily have a sexual disease sleep between your sheets? There are thousands of young people who are dying without help or hope, young girls who are abused in every possible way, because no one will take the chance to show them the better way. This is where we must

begin. This is what the love of God means. The admonition to the elder is the same for every Christian minister—that we be given to hospitality, to the unfortunate as well. Jesus asked, “What good does it do if you are kind only to someone who will pay you back. You have your reward already.”

“The biggest single danger to our young people today is the drug-scene. Our ministry must include help to this person, and it very well might require using your home as the center of this ministry. Sure it is a danger to your family and you must be careful. But if we talk about the drug problem in the name of Christ, our ministry might be to help someone in this horrible situation. If you have been married for years and years and have a home (or even a room) and have never used it for Christ, perhaps this is where your ministry needs to begin.”<sup>6</sup>

## EVERY CHRISTIAN A MINISTER IN SICKNESS AND BEREAVEMENT

There are many kinds of suffering—physical pain, mental anxiety, bereavement, and a world of others. “But regardless of the kind (of suffering) man’s calamity is God’s opportunity.”<sup>7</sup> God’s opportunity occurs through His ministers, and our gift may well be in bringing a belief in God to a suffering soul—to provide him with a refuge and an ever present help to strengthen the sufferer. The brotherhood of man demands

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<sup>6</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the 20th Century*, (Downers Grove, Illinois; Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), p. 108.

<sup>7</sup> Leroy Brownlow, *Flowers That Never Fade*, (Fort Worth, Texas: Brownlow Publishing Company, 1959), p. 19.

that we respond to each other's joys and sorrows. The Bible says, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15). Jesus exemplified this spirit at the tomb of Lazarus when he wept. Jesus wept because His great heart was touched. "The sad tears from an aching heart and the sympathetic tears from a true friend become misty hues which form a beautiful rainbow reaching from one to the other."<sup>8</sup>

The fact that we are all brothers in humanity inclines us to become involved with another's sorrows, and requires us to share with another our faith, which is the power for comfort.

#### THE MINISTRY OF THE HOME

If there is righteousness in the heart,  
There will be beauty in the character.  
If there is beauty in the character,  
There will be love in the home.  
If there is love in the home,  
There will be order in the nation.  
If there is order in the nation,  
There will be peace in the world.

Tom Ingram

What a powerful ministry is conducted in the home-setting. Here our Lord has commanded husbands to be providers of spiritual and material substance. He has commanded wives to be providers of love, harmony, nourishment

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.



of body and spirit. In the home souls are created and developed for service of the Lord.

Psychologists agree that during the last stage of adolescence young people have, more or less, accepted their parents' attitudes, prejudices, ideas as their own. Even beyond our basic attitudes and personalities, which express our love and devotion to the Lord, every Christian parent is presented countless opportunities to explain to their children that it is God who provides all the good things which benefit us, to show the real evidence of God's presence and care. It is in home devotions that a child's puzzling mind can be best discovered, and his deepest problems confronted and answered, and where parents can feel the deepest gratitude to a God who gives such supernal gifts. Who can doubt the role of every parent a minister when they alone hold the ability to rear their children to be dedicated Christian ministers.

The body of Christ, how magnificent an organization it is; yet, how serious its inability to function fully because of members whose abilities go unused. The greatest need in the church today goes beyond the need for more men in the pulpits, more missionaries on foreign soil; the greatest need is for every Christian to recognize his gifts, and become a minister.

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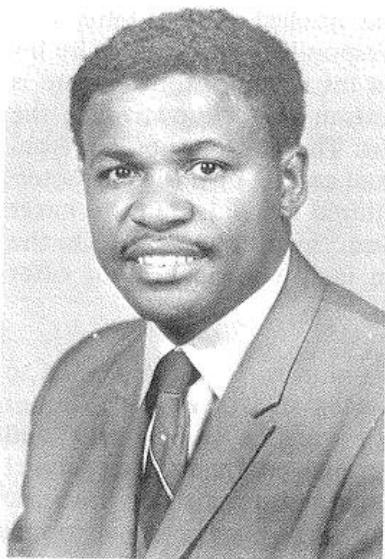
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## THE NATURE OF GROUP WORSHIP

JACK EVANS

Jack Evans is a native of Houston, Texas. He was baptized into the church of Christ in 1953 at the age of 15 by the late Paul Settles. He began preaching at the age of 16. After attending the public schools of Houston for nine years, he transferred to the Nashville Christian Institute in Nashville, Tennessee, of which the eminent Marshall Keeble was President at the time. He graduated from this high school in 1957. He then enrolled in Southwestern Christian College, a junior college, of Terrell, Texas, from which he graduated in 1959. He served as the Associate Minister of the College Church of Christ while attending Southwestern.

After graduating from Southwestern Christian College, Jack Evans enrolled in Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico, majoring in History and Religion. He graduated from this university in



1961. He preached for a small congregation in Hale Center, Texas, while in college in New Mexico. Upon graduating from this university he began graduate work in History and English at the University of Texas at El Paso (Texas Western College at the time) in 1961, receiving his M.A. degree in 1963. His M.A. thesis was entitled "The History of Southwestern Christian College of Terrell, Texas." He was Minister of the Cebada Street Church of Christ in El Paso while attending the university. Harding College conferred upon him the honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D) degree in 1971.

After serving for a short while as Minister of the Vickery Boulevard Church of Christ in Ft. Worth, Texas, he became Dean of his junior college Alma Mater, Southwestern Christian College, in 1963. He served in this capacity and as instructor in History for four years, 1963-67. In 1967 he was appointed President of this college, thus becoming the first black President of the only predominantly black Christian college among churches of Christ. He is presently serving in this capacity. He is listed in *Who's Who in American College and University Administration* and *Who's Who in Texas Today*.

Jack Evans is married to the former Patricia Officer of Nashville, Tennessee. They have three sons, Jack, Jr., Herbert Raye, and David Paul.

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The worship of God is the noblest responsibility and privilege of man. The creature responds to the Creator by his honor and adoration of Him. In his worship, the creature is expressing his gratitude for creation and acknowledging the infinite superiority of his creator. The worship of God, from the beginning of mankind, has had certain intrinsic characteristics and qualities that were required by God. Man was never given the latitude to worship God "in his own way." On the contrary, man has always been instructed in how to offer acceptable worship to the Father.

And while the "how" of worship is clearly explained to man in the Bible, it is also revealed that there are different forms of worship. Man may worship individually and privately, and/or publicly and congregationally. The subject under consideration now is the nature, or the intrinsic characteristics and qualities, of group or congregational worship.

Group worship is a part of the continued public confession of Jesus Christ by the Christians in their recreated lives. It says to the world that these people lift up their eyes to the hills from which their help comes, for they declare openly that their help comes from God who made the heavens and the earth. Therefore, this declaration is magnified continually in each phase of the group or congregational worship.

“ . . . *The Assembling of Ourselves Together* . . . ”

Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). Thus, the gathering together of the people of God in the name of Christ makes that group a divine body from which emanates acceptable worship. This group is different from other groups, religious and nonreligious, because it is gathered by the authority of Jesus Christ. And the characteristics and qualities of its worship are dictated by Him. These people who have come together have a mutual purpose—the worship of God, and are animated by the same power—the power of Jesus Christ, who is in the midst of them. To illustrate, the chemist mixes his various elements together in the battery, and when they are brought together and the conditions are fulfilled, electricity is there. He does not summon electricity from some remote distance; but already dormant in those elements was the electric power, and when they are combined, instantly the electric power springs into existence. So Christ said, “In each of you Christians in this group is a dormant power. I am in ye, but there is more of me in all of you together than there is in any one of you separately and individually; and when you have combined around my banner and my name to do my will, there springs into existence not merely strength that comes from union, but a Diviner help that comes from the fact that I am in the

midst of the group, the spirit that inspires the body.” Therefore, one purpose for group worship is to generate greater power through, by and for Christ and the church.

Another purpose for group worship is that of mutual edification. We gather and worship as a group in order to help each other. A Christian is his “brother’s keeper.” We are responsible to one another for what we can do for each other in the fitting expression of that spiritual life which we have in common. Our call is to serve and edify each other. “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25).

In every congregation there are the strong and the weak! “Let those who are strong bear the infirmities of the weak.” In every congregation there are the advanced, the experienced, and the saintly; let them provoke to all goodness the beginners, the young, and those whose life is in its struggling-time. Spiritual virtues and powers are for mutual edification. They are not personal possessions, but are trusts for use. Thus, we share these with each other in group worship activities.

Another purpose of group worship is that of manifesting the unity of the saints. Jesus prayed that we all might be one, that the world would believe that He was sent by God, the Father. When Christians join together in a singleness of purpose, all worshipping God with “one mind and one mouth,” they are responding to the prayer of Jesus for unity. And they are, by example, giving the message of Christ to the world.

*Attitude and Atmosphere*

Acceptable group worship must be characterized by an atmosphere of holiness. "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him! Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (I Chron. 16:29). And the holiness of the occasion is determined by the attitudes of the worshippers. Group worshippers who have to be quieted previous to services and reminded that they are there to worship are making a very poor start. "Clock-eyed" group worshippers are not worshipping. Group worshippers who are spectators *of* the services and not participants *in* the services are wasting their time.

God seeks out the kind of worshippers which He desires. In the discussion between Jesus and a Samaritan woman, the woman asked Him about the place of worship. Jesus responded to her question by emphasizing that the "where" of worship was not as important as the "how" of worship. Jesus said, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Thus, true worship must be offered in spirit and in truth.

Spirit, as used in the quoted verse, does not refer to the Holy Spirit, but to the spirit of man—that part of man's constitution through which he most especially bears the image of God, and in which he dwells (Romans 8:16). The worship in spirit is worship contrasted with all mere carnal concomitants, all mere shadows of the good things to come, all mere ritual, all specialties of place, or time, or order. For to emphasize the order of worship, while not possessing the

true spirit of worship is to make the worship but ceremonial ritualism. Outward worship is to religion just what a bank note is to commerce; it is valuable only insofar as it is really representative of something beyond itself. The worship which does not really represent penitence, faith and love in the worshippers is a falsehood, and is repulsive to the God of truth and detrimental to the soul of the offerer. As the sunlight which develops life only hastens the putrefaction of the dead, so the very services which help to sanctify and ennoble the saintly may more completely disqualify the insincere forever.

No elaborateness or costliness of ceremonial worship can atone for the absence of godliness in the lives of the worshippers; sacrifices are no equivalents for sanctification; and by the love of sin in the souls of the pretended worshippers even a divinely appointed ritual is rendered abhorrent to the God of heaven.

The Israelites of old, God's people, were great believers in outward shows of group worship, but their hearts and spirits, like many in the church today, were far from God. Therefore, God, through His prophet Isaiah, condemned the attitude of His people and rejected their group worship. (Read Isaiah 1:11-20). Because of their not having the attitude of worship, God said that, "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting (verse 13).

What, then, are the elements in worship essential to its acceptance with God? (1) That it be offered by obedient people; (2) that it be offered with reverence and sincerity; (3) that it be the expression of love and adoration; (4) that each phase of group worship be according to God's revealed truth. Where these principles animate the group worshippers, they



will be governed by them also in their daily life; their whole life will be a service and sacrifice well-pleasing in the sight of God, and what are called their "acts of worship" will not be artificial flowers stuck on the dead and rotting branches for their adornment, but sweet, natural blossoms, upon which God will smile and pronounce "very good."

### *Acts of Group Worship*

What is to be included in group worship has been dictated to us by God, Himself. And each act, or "item," of worship must be rendered according to His requirement. God has given no set standard of order or form as to when each act of public worship is to be done. But we must follow the general principles of doing "all things decently and in order."

*Singing*—God commands us to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In group singing, we teach and admonish one another. Therefore, we must sing with the spirit and the understanding.

*Praying*—While Christians are told to "pray always," prayer in public worship is a necessity. Paul says, "... by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to the Lord" (Phil. 4:6). Public prayer is the rendering of this admonition in unison. While individual prayers may also be uttered in group worship, the public prayer, besides its being a joint petition, also serves as an outward show to non-Christians of our direct communication with God. We must not "say a prayer," we must pray.

*Giving*—Group worshippers are commanded to give of their financial means upon the first day of the week for the support of the work of the church (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This giving

must be done out of a spirit of love, willingly, not reluctantly or under compulsion.

*Preaching or Teaching*—The church of Christ in the first century had preaching on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Following this example today, group teaching or preaching should be designed to reach the lost and strengthen the saved.

*Communing*—The early church, in its group worship, communed with Christ upon the first day of each week (Acts 20:7). We today who participate in group worship must “continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayer.”

In summarizing this brief study of the nature of group worship, we find that the intrinsic characteristics, qualities and purposes of group worship are designed to assist in accomplishing the task of perfecting the saints, doing the work of the ministry, and edifying the body of Christ.

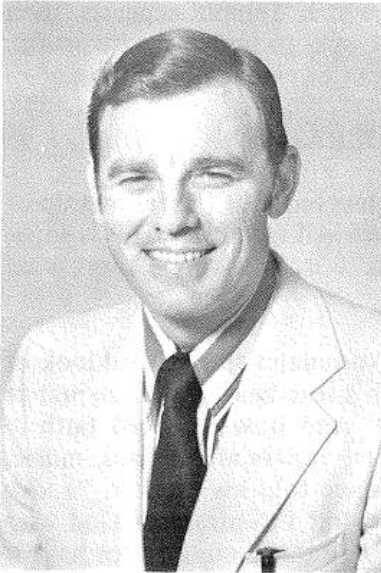
## IMPROVING OUR WORSHIP

### LANNY HENNINGER

Lanny Henninger is a native of Baytown, Texas and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Abilene Christian College in 1956. Graduate work has been done at Abilene Christian, Texas Christian University, and Seminary of the Southwest.

Mr. Henninger has served as minister of churches in George West and Dallas, Texas. In 1960-61 he worked with the College church in Abilene, and from 1961-66 he was minister for the Sixth and Jackson congregation in Odessa, Texas. From June, 1966, Henninger served as minister for the Richland Hills church in Fort Worth, Texas, until his move to the University Avenue church, Austin, in July, 1971.

He has preached in religious meetings in New Mexico, Illinois, New York, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, Alaska and Texas. In the



summer of 1969 he was featured in special services in England and Scotland. Henninger has appeared on lectureships at L.C.C., A.C.C., Harding, F.W.C.C., O.C.C. and Pepperdine. He has written for several brotherhood papers, including *Power For Today* and *20th Century Christian*. During his Odessa ministry, Henninger was the speaker on a daily five minute television program, and he has taught in Training for Service programs in Oklahoma and Texas.

Mr. Henninger and his wife Joan have three children, Tom, 14 years, Lana, 12 years, and Stephen, 4 years.

Some years ago the late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, said in a radio broadcast to the people of the United States:

“I am disposed to begin by making what many people will feel to be a quite outrageous statement. This world can be saved from political chaos and collapse by only one thing, and that is worship. For to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open up the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”

Such an observation, whether we fully grasp it or not, is a sweeping comment on the nature and power of Christian worship. And—in all likelihood—it describes an experience which all too few of us all too infrequently have known. If worship contains the qualities which Temple suggests, then we should be at some pains not only to understand worship, but to improve it until it matches this classic description.

### SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Someone has somewhere observed that the fellowship of the church is a “sight that makes hell tremble.” This is so, as the writer of Hebrews points out, for three very good reasons.

In the first place, worship stimulates the upward look of faith. “. . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . .” (*Hebrews 10:22*). And how we need faith in this day of poets and murderers, violets and armies, music, rats, and cholera! A little lad once told his mother, “I love the God who sends the flowers, but I’m afraid of God who makes storms.” Most of us have had this feeling . . . or have it yet.

Now a man can find and increase his faith in the privacy of his own home. One is not forbidden—rather encouraged—to draw near to God in the quiet of his room. But there is a rich and moving approach to God when it is a community experience, a sharing of hearts, souls, and minds. There is a power in praising the Lord in the company of “them that have obtained a like precious faith.”

There are two great threats to faith. One is self-righteous pride, which stifles all holiness. The Pharisee in Jesus’ terse parable illustrates this danger. The other threat is fear which makes us want to hide our opportunities or ourselves. And we mimic the words of another, “. . . I . . . hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” A Christian in isolation easily falls prey to either of these influences. In the company of believers it is easier to believe.

Again, worship creates the forward look of hope. “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope . . .” (*Hebrews 10:23*) In a day of despair hope is a rare commodity, but it is the hallmark of the Christian. Paul comments, “For in this hope we were saved” (*Romans 8:24*). We live in hope of redemption of the body . . . in hope of the second coming of Christ . . . in hope of the city with eternal foundations . . . in hope of ultimate victory. Our mutual hope is grounded in the promises of one who is faithful.

Ask any of the unnumbered faithful, in any land or generation, whether or not God is a keeper of promises. Their answer is our assurance. We could ask for no stronger evidence.

“Finding, following, keeping, struggling,  
Is he sure to bless?”

Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs,  
Answer, 'Yes!'

This is our hope, and it is effectively seen and expressed in occasions of high worship.

Once more, worship encourages the outward look of love. "...let us consider how to stir up one another to love..." (*Hebrews 10:24*). Before his crucifixion Jesus pinned these words forever in the air, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (*John 13:34, 35*). Our commentary on this passage—in the main—has been naked unbelief; our conduct has yellowed the page. We not only do not love as he did, we often do not even seem to care.

But the fellowship of worship can remedy our apathy. Exposure to a God who is love leaves its image on the heart of the sensitive.

An old man, interviewed on the radio, said, "I'll be 90 tomorrow, and I haven't an enemy in the world." "That's a happy thought," observed the announcer. "Yep," the old fellow continued, "I've outlived all of them." When the Spanish patriot, Navarez, lay dying, he was asked if he had forgiven all his enemies. "I have no enemies," he smiled, "I have shot them all!" That's a thought, too. Lincoln showed a better way. After making a kind remark about the South, he was rebuked by a woman who thought he should want to destroy them. "Madam," he said slowly, "do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?"

But an abused Nazarene showed the best way of destroying enemies . . . not by making them friends, but by making them brethren. So worship becomes a sermon on the esteem, respect, and love that Christians have for each other. And it encourages others to love.

### AREAS OF WEAKNESS

It will be noted that in practice, however, we rarely find all of these things happening. That is, our public periods of worship do not ordinarily generate—at least to any high degree—the qualities of faith, hope, and love we would like to experience. This, perhaps, is an excessive criticism of our public service, but I do not think so. Anyone who has listened long to the complaints of brethren or who has wrestled with the task of improving the worship service will not think so, either. At any rate I want to suggest several areas of fundamental weakness in our corporate worship. These observations will not exhaust the list. Perhaps they will not even touch the major considerations, but I do believe they point up some vulnerable spots that need bolstering.

### LAZINESS

The first indictment of our worship services is really an accusation against our laziness. Because we are creatures of habit we often find it an unnecessary disturbance to change things. This holds true in our order of worship. Having found it convenient to use the same number of hymns (often the same hymns), the same procedures, the same stereotyped phrases, we are freed from the chore of doing some creative thinking about our worship. While some find it relaxing to be able to anticipate the structure of every service, I am more inclined to think the overall result is deadening.

It has been periodically argued that we should not change just for the sake of change. While I do not question the motives of anyone who says this, I do believe their conclusion is open to serious challenge. My own reaction is, Why not? Could not one argue with equal logic that we should not remain the same just for the sake of remaining the same? What better reason could one have for change than the benefits which change can bring—versatility, new insights, freshness, and the stimulation to think and learn and grow.

A large part of our problem, it seems to me, has been in our unwillingness to spend the necessary time and effort to vary our services. (I am not saying, of course, that the mere juggling of items of worship will insure a spiritual worship experience. I am simply suggesting that we have not wanted to take the time to do even that.)

### SELFISHNESS

A second observation involves the degree of selfishness in our public worship. In *How To Become A Bishop Without Being Religious* Charles Merrill Smith has included a chapter entitled “Conducting Public Worship, An Exercise in Nostalgia.” It is Smith’s contention that people do not leave warm beds and a leisurely reading of the Sunday paper for such an abstraction as the worshipping of God. They do not go to church—he continues with his incisive satire—even out of habit or because they are fleeing loneliness. Rather, as his chapter heading suggests, men are really in the market for “subjective worship,” that is, the worship of oneself.

The minister’s task, Smith continues, is to produce the proper religious feelings. Since nostalgia is the name of the game, worship becomes a vehicle to call men’s memory back



to a time when life was simpler, responsibilities lighter, and the passage of time was no threat.

While we should take Smith's comments for what they are—satire—we should also be aware that they are satire with a bite. There could be a far greater element of truth in them for us than we could care to admit. Perhaps we do go to worship to escape, to be soothed, to be reminded of an unthreatening past. Perhaps—unthinking, to be sure—we have permitted this to influence our public worship. As a result, we have removed the elements of risk from our services, but we have also anesthetized our spirit. While we have been made comfortable, it is at the expense of our purpose and mission. So, in essence, who we praise and salute in our assemblies is not the Lord, but what we have conceived him to be. That is, as Smith charges, the worship of oneself.

### AUDIENCE MENTALITY

Perhaps the most serious charge of weakness in our contemporary worship is the presence of “audience mentality.” If we have understood it correctly, in biblical days the people gathered to praise the Lord as they experienced his presence. There is no intimation of the use of theatrics to achieve effect; indeed it would have been out of place. Somehow we have lost the coming together to experience the presence of God. Instead worship has been reduced to an hour of religious entertainment. This has led to—or been caused by—an audience mentality.

By audience mentality I mean the tendency of the congregation to think of itself as an audience. The worshipers are there to *hear*, *observe*, and *criticize*. If this seems too

sweeping a judgment on most churches, you will, I trust, simply consider the source. However, I am convinced there is a strong element of truth in the accusation.

There are some reasons for the development of audience mentality. The architecture of our church buildings lends itself to this kind of thinking. An elevated platform provides an area where the leaders of the worship hour at least can be seen, if not appreciated. The congregation is usually silent in its outward contribution, while a great deal of emphasis is placed on the personal dynamics of the service leaders. However one chooses to judge it, the atmosphere is much the same as a theater. The church is encouraged to gaze rather than to worship.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

In what ways can we improve our worship? How can we correct our weaknesses? The answer, it seems to me, is two dimensional. There must be some attention given to correcting and enlarging *individual* thinking. And there must also be concentration on *congregational* practice. Let me speak to these areas in turn.

We must be—as a body of Christians—reminded of the biblical emphasis on a priesthood of believers. That is, there is a continuing need for us to be impressed that we—not someone appointed for us—bring to worship our gifts of praise and adoration. This doctrine is so clearly taught in the New Testament that it needs little proof here. One observation will suffice:

Jesus “. . . made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father . . .” (*Revelation 1:6*).

Christians, however, need a constant remembrance of what this implies for them.

For example, Christian priesthood suggests that the disciple has access to God. He can pray to God now . . . confess sins to him now . . . intercede on behalf of others now . . . ask God's blessings now. While the burden of so many of our sermons is to get people to come to worship, it is imperative that we recall why they should come. Not so much out of duty. Not because they are threatened. Not because they have been on the receiving end of a sensational promotional campaign. Not because they seek entertainment. But most of all because the Christian himself, as a priest, offers up "spiritual sacrifices" to God. Awareness of the Christian's access to the Lord is a powerful incentive to worship.

Also, as we have already said, the Christian priest brings a gift to God. His *work* is an offering, and when it is dedicated to him, becomes clad with glory. His *worship* is an offering, and so becomes, not a burden, but a joy.

Again, the Christian priest has a responsibility to others. The Latin word for priest is "pontifex." And this term means "bridge-builder." The Christian priest builds a bridge for others to know Christ. He influences men to become disciples, to obey the gospel. A large part of his influence is exercised in his worship. This is so basic to the life of the church we wonder why all Christians have not clearly seen it.

All of which is to say, if our worship is to be improved, we must bring a re-defined role to the worship hour. And leaders in the churches must make clear, not just the fact, but the implications of the doctrine of priesthood of all believers.

It should have a featured place in the continuing educational program of the church. Once George Bernard Shaw described a character—Lady *Britomart* in Major Barbara—with these words: “. . . whose conscience is clear and her duty done when she has called everybody names.” Unfortunately too many Christians have seen their duty in much the same way, and have stopped being priests.

For worship to become more meaningful to the individual, the congregation should be involved, for we are talking about corporate worship. And, as we have already implied, our services should not be tied blindly to a traditionalism. Public worship should serve in part the function of *remembrance*. Thus, our services are connected with tradition (that which explains the experience of Christ in the past in order to shape the present and the future.) But they should not be irreversibly tied to a structure or order of service that is as much cultural as biblical. Our services are not holy because we have done the same things in the same way for years; nor do they become unacceptable because variety and creativity are used in public worship. (Of course, the opposite can be true as well. New approaches alone will not produce a more helpful worship hour, and we should avoid the mistake of jettisoning everything that is “old” simply because it is familiar.)

The value of varying the public services—at least this is my thesis—lies in its tendency to sharpen the awareness of the congregation. Consequently, they are more likely to become *participants* rather than *spectators*, which should be one of our objectives.

Two steps form the basis for an improved worship service. First, there is the building of a sense of preparation

and expectation in the congregation. This can be accomplished through an educational background by means of personal presentation (sermon or lesson) and printed material. The second step includes a small core of responsible people who will put the service together and for whom this is a real contribution to the whole church.

In conclusion, let me make several suggestions which may or may not be useful in every situation. It seems to me that we could use much more creativity in our worship in song. I think we might be benefited if we were more open to some of the newer hymns.

It is clear, also, that more attention should be given to our observance of the Lord's Supper. Some of the most appreciative comments I have ever heard come from people who had participated in a Sunday morning hour where the communion service was emphasized throughout. Our brethren in England put great stress on the Supper in their Lord's Day morning worship (they do not, as a rule, serve communion at the evening hour.) Men of the congregation are used not only to serve the bread and the cup, but also to explain the spiritual meaning of the Supper.

Again, churches would be well advised to employ more effectively reading from the Scriptures in the public services. Responsive readings and congregational readings could also be valuable aids to worship.

It should be observed in closing that care should be taken to avoid a flagrant sensationalism in structuring (if that is a proper term) a worship service. Common sense and a feel for the entire congregation will keep churches from bizarre and unseemly programs of worship. Just as those qualities

will also lead us to periods of worship where the entire congregation joins to praise and bless God as well as receive a word from him.

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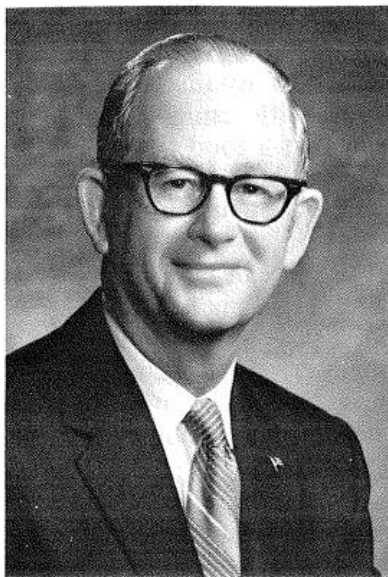
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## THE NATURE OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

### HOMER GAINER

- Born April 28, 1922—Eden, Texas
- Baptized September 1936
- Graduate of Eden High School, Eden, Texas
- Graduate of Texas A&M University—BS Degree, May 1943
- Postgraduate work—University of Houston, 1954-1955
- Married Betty Marlar, Melvin, Texas, December 11, 1943
- Two daughters and one son:  
Mrs. Billy M. Kilgore, Jr. (Dell Anne)



Mrs. Vernon H. Berry, Jr. (Lucy) both attended Abilene Christian College. Joe Marlar Gainer—attends Dallas Christian High School.

Received Army commission during World War II and attained rank of Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve.

Served as deacon at MacGregor Park and Southwest congregations, Houston, Texas. Served as deacon and later as elder at Carrollton Avenue congregation, New Orleans, Louisiana. Presently serving as elder at Skillman Avenue, Dallas, Texas.

- Member of Board of Trustees—Christian College of the Southwest and Christian Schools, Inc. in Dallas. Vice-Chairman of Advisory Board of Trustees, Abilene Christian College.
  - Employed as Employee Relations Coordinator, Humble Oil & Refining Company, Dallas, Texas.
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My assignment deals with the nature of church leadership. I hope to develop the Biblical idea of a leader who also serves, rather than a leader who is no more than one in authority. This suggests that an elder has authority. It does not intend to lessen an elder's authority. I hope to establish the kind of authority intended by the scriptures, and discuss the wisest use of that authority as one leads the church.

By leadership, I mean the art of gaining the willing support and cooperation of a group, with resulting change in their behavior. It is my conviction that a good church leader has the voluntary following of members, and that these members lead better lives through the influence of the leader.

I believe leadership is an art which can be acquired and developed by training, study, and experience. I emphasize this matter with the hope that boys, young men, and deacons will be encouraged to prepare themselves for the noble task mentioned in Acts 20:28. Perhaps too long we have treated the matter of elderships in a mysterious manner when, in truth, the ability to lead can be developed.

Surely all of us are aware of qualifications and duties of elders set forth in I Timothy 3, Titus 1, and I Peter 5. Are



there certain qualities, virtues, and abilities which would enhance the leadership of elders?

Let us think for the next few minutes about certain features of leadership. Since we are limited by time, I have chosen to confine my comments by using a simple acrostic—LEAD. My prayer is that present and future elders will be encouraged to LEAD by:

- L – Logic
- E – Example
- A – Administration
- D – Devotion

L—LOGIC: By logic, I mean that wonderfully necessary requisite of an elder to weigh a matter carefully and thereby reach a just and reasonable solution. God's people are entitled to leaders who have the ability to make fair and equitable decisions. When choosing an elder, let us give considerable weight to the selection of a man who has demonstrated his ability to use logic in the decision-making process. The church can ill afford the selection of a leader whose decisions are based on emotion or what's good for his business. I suppose each of us could recite instances of elders who were selected because they had fathered two believing children with not enough consideration given to the man's reasoning and decision-making ability.

It becomes apparent also that a leader who employs logic will be one who avoids indecision. Elders must learn to give ample consideration to every matter. It is a mistake to make hasty decisions in most instances; however, elders must realize the importance of pursuing their tasks with due diligence. Having weighed the matter, an elder should come to a conclusion without equivocation. Such action will help

avoid the confusion of a trumpet's uncertain sound mentioned in I Corinthians 14:8. It seems obvious that the employment of logic to reach an orderly decision will instill confidence in the congregation. Leaders suffer a loss of respect when decisions are postponed or reversed or avoided. Elders must be doers. They must never be guilty of wringing their hands while pondering a decision. Perhaps the courage of leaders will become stronger with a reminder of the assurance found in Romans 8:31, "If God be for us who can be against us?"

There is a danger that an over-emphasis can be placed on the importance of logic when discussing church leadership. Decisions should be easier for church leaders because the scriptures are available to help guide in every case. I know godly elders who cope with difficult questions and problems because they have a strong faith and firmly believe in the power of the scriptures to help them determine the correct answer. This is substantiated by instances we recall in which those with the most reverent attitude toward God seemed to be those who made the best use of logic.

E-EXAMPLE: It seems to me the New Testament principle of leadership by example is best related in Matthew 20:25-28. It is the concept of servanthood. It is the lesson taught by Jesus in Matthew 23:11-12. It is similar to King Solomon's statement in Proverbs 15:33, "before honour is humility." Perhaps most people think of leadership as superiority. This idea is necessarily erroneous because elders are to be Christ-like and therefore servants. Leadership in the church is not related to self-aggrandizement; because the leader is to be like Christ—the servant of all. Members are not likely to follow unless they see a godly example reflected in the leader's life. The problem of church leadership lies in the

area of authority. Few people question the authority of a leader. At times there is a question of the manner in which the leader exercises authority. An elder's authority becomes authoritative only by his good life (his example). He should resign if he ever resorts to saying, "Do what I say, and not what I do." Elders should trust in the power of example. It is risky to attempt leadership in any other manner. Elders should fully realize the importance of their manner of life. An elder's every word, deed, and activity is subject to close scrutiny. This is fitting and right and thus it behooves each elder to be especially diligent to set a worthy example. The spirituality of an elder's life is the single most important factor in the determination of his ability as a church leader.

A—ADMINISTRATION: Another important feature of church leadership is administration. The nature of church leadership demands that an elder be a strong administrator. We recognize (and sometimes pray) that an elder should rule wisely and manage well. This means he must be a good organizer. In many of his duties and assignments, an elder acts as an executive. Therefore, he must be able to organize his own life. The life of an elder is a busy life. It demands a tremendous amount of time. Somehow, almost every night of the week is scheduled for committees, counseling sessions, meetings, and visitation. A man who doesn't have organizational talent will probably find it difficult to serve as an elder.

The responsibilities of leadership require elders who can administer the financial affairs of a congregation. The yearly budget where I worship is set above one-fourth million dollars. The weekly contributions average more than \$5,200. The value of the plant and facilities is in excess of one million dollars. To me, this represents big and important business. If

the amounts were only 5% of the above figures, the items would be important, and business-like decisions would be required. Unless each elder has administrative ability there may be a tendency to look to one "financial" elder and this can sow the evil seed of a chief elder.

Leadership through administration is also important because elders must learn the art of delegation. There is a human tendency, it seems, not to delegate. We may be apt to teach the lesson of Jethro and Moses as related in Exodus 18, but somehow elders sometimes fail to make the personal application. It is no compliment for a leader to be considered indispensable. No leader can be considered a fine executive and administrator until he has learned to trust subordinates with delegated authority. After elders learn this important lesson in leadership, the next step becomes a matter of follow-up. Administrative management of the corporation where I work has been simplified into the following steps: forecasting, planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling.

There is another reason why elders need to be strong in administration. Good administrators are punctual. There is a tendency for certain leaders to be dilatory. It is difficult to respect a man who appears to have formed the habit of procrastination. Some elders seem to be habitually behind with their duties. This practice delays and sometimes stifles the work of the church. Somewhere I heard it said that if a person can manage to stay one week behind on work then somehow that person can manage to stay caught up. Elders should make every effort to keep current their work in the Lord's church.

D—DEVOTION: Finally, the nature of church leadership

is such that each elder must be completely devoted to the Way. He must be fervent in spirit. The influence of an elder is so strong that he must manifest a high degree of spirituality. God intends that His people be spiritual. Members will follow devoted elders who are spiritually minded. Each elder therefore must prove by his devoted life that he loves God first.

For several years I have been convinced of the necessity for daily devotion. I became more convinced as I studied closely the lives of great men of the Bible. One particular item of interest is that many of them rose early in the morning for a quiet time with God. This daily meeting with God is effective if there is a definite time and place. A Bible, notebook, and a prayer list is needed. There should be a spirit of expectancy (John 7:17). The next step is to write down the thoughts gleaned from reading during this quiet time (one chapter each day is suggested). Please read the wonderfully uplifting booklet, *Manna in the Morning* by Stephen F. Olford. Your life as a devoted Christian will surely be stimulated.

It was my privilege in 1955 to serve as a deacon in Houston, Texas, under three devoted elders: Brothers Fletcher Dailey, Sr., C. L. Patterson, and W. O. Watson. The wonderful influence of these godly men is impossible to measure. Their devotion to God manifested itself in their personal lives, but also in every area of the work of the church they served. They devoted themselves to building up attendance, to an active teaching program, to emphasis on visitation and personal work, to benevolent works as individuals and by the congregation, and to a worldwide mission program. As you would know, they were ideal elders. They were ideal because they were devoted.

This concludes my main remarks concerning the nature of church leadership. I pray that henceforth the leadership qualities I have mentioned will be considered in the selection of prospective elders. My prayer is that each newly appointed elder will incorporate these suggestions into his leadership role and that his congregation will be led by "L"—his logic, by "E"—his example, by "A"—his administration, and by "D"—his devotion.

There are other synonyms which you may wish to substitute for the words I chose. For example, I thought of *love* as the word to use for the letter L in the acrostic. Certainly, none of us would disagree on the importance of an elder's love. Without this chief virtue an elder's efforts toward leadership would be almost nil. We could also use the word *long-suffering* since this is a god-like quality we all recognize. For an E, there is much to be said for use of the word *enthusiasm*. Some congregations undoubtedly suffer because their eldership lacks enthusiasm. It is not unkind to state that some leaders are tired and old. Many have served long and faithfully, and have been soldiers of the cross for years and years. It is so very important for all elders to maintain their enthusiasm. Another appropriate word might be *empathy*. The "now" generation preaches the need for understanding. I have observed elderships who should heed this plea because some leaders are doing almost nothing to close an obvious generation gap. For the letter A in the acrostic, one might wish to use *advice*. An elder's advice can be invaluable. I feel Christians oftentimes do not avail themselves of the wonderful counsel that many kind, compassionate, and understanding elders could provide. It is both practical and scriptural to consult those who can furnish sound suggestions and good advice. An elder's *attitude* is a vital factor in his leadership role. As each of us grows in

Christian graces we must strive to maintain a loving and compassionate attitude. This will require a conscious effort to avoid callousness or indifference. In lieu of devotion, the words *dedication* or *desire* would possibly apply.

Whatever the words, we can be assured that God needs men who can develop the ability to influence others and assume the challenge and responsibility of becoming elders. It is my conclusion such men can best serve as elders when they do so by (1) their teaching, and (2) their servanthood.

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## “PRODUCING BETTER LEADERS”

### GENE POLVADO

Born at Ackerly, Texas, May 6, 1933

Reared at Boles Home, Quinlan, Texas

Attended ACC and the University of Houston

Began preaching part-time at Houston, Texas, while working as a sales representative at a large industrial firm.

Entered full-time preaching in 1961 in Corpus Christi, Texas. Worked with the Hillcrest and Arlington Heights churches for 8 years.

Has been preaching for the 9th and Columbia Church of Christ, Plainview, Texas, since July 1, 1969.



He is married to the former Nancy Hunt of Brownwood, Texas. They have four children—Leslie 15; Lanell 14; Joy 9; Tim 4.

Holds about six meetings each year.

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During March of 1940 a local church selected four men to serve as elders. At the time of their appointment they ranged from forty to fifty years of age. Today all are either



dead or have resigned due to ill health or old age. During their tenure as bishops, compassion for the unfortunate was preached and practiced. The commission to evangelize was taken seriously as evangelists were sent to the mission fields. Peace within the church and favor with all the people was theirs to enjoy. Besides all of this they had a good knowledge of the facts of the Bible. Prospects for growth were good as the city grew from 21,000 in 1940 to 68,000 in the 1970 Federal Government census. Nearly every Sunday they thanked God for their homes, friends, brethren, and they thanked God that at long last they could have a note burning, signifying the omega note had been paid. Now let us look at that same church in 1972. Membership and worship attendance have dropped from five hundred to two hundred and twenty while the town has more than tripled in size. When you visit that church today you will hear them praise their past performances, but say nothing about what they plan to do in the future. In brief they are living in the past. Many would call this a sound, solid and forward looking church. But my understanding of what the New Testament church is leads me to believe that God is just before declaring them a disaster area. What happened? They did many good works, but failed to do the one thing that would assure a continuous growth and that is the training of men to serve as leaders in the New Testament church. What we call the law of diminishing returns has caught up with them. The above illustration is not of any one particular congregation, but describes a situation that all of us have seen occur many times in our lifetime.

There have been a few scattered attempts to train men as elders in the church, but our general procedure has been to install them and let them get the training in the area where the action is. At a time when some have given up on the

ability of the church to perform her God ordained task, let me state emphatically that I believe in the power of the local church and I'm more excited about the role of the church in our society than at any other time in my life. We have both the responsibility and the ability to train preachers, elders, Bible teachers, and others who serve the church in the fulfillment of her mission.

Whatever the church has the responsibility to do, the church has the responsibility to train men to do.

Christ gave intensive training to the men who served in the apostolic office during the first century. Can you imagine a man like Peter stepping out of the boat at Galilee and immediately ascending to the pulpit in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost? The training that Jesus gave did not change their manner of speech, it changed their manner of life. The entire training course had as its theme, be not afraid nor faithless, but believe. Training men today to lead God's spiritual army must of necessity deal with the heart. Jerusalem's first congregational problem arose in Acts 6. The apostles knew what to do and how to handle the people. The training they had received from Jesus proved to be very profitable when the crisis arose. Let us analyze what really happened.

1. A church problem arose.
2. The twelve called the church together and took them into their confidence.
3. The apostles set before the church the spiritual qualities necessary to handle the work.
4. The church chose the men.
5. The apostles appointed them.
6. The saying pleased the whole multitude.

7. "The word of God increased and the number of the disciples grew and multiplied in Jerusalem greatly."

Men who are close to God can make equally as wise decisions in the 20th century. Common sense, wisdom, and a dedicated heart were the credentials with which the apostles made their decision. Saints and sinners alike took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. As long as God works through men spiritual training must continue. From the death of Joseph until God trained Moses to lead, Israel was a bond servant nation. Military men have said Moses was a great military leader. Christian men have said that he was a great spiritual leader. Why? Because God trained him, sent him, used him and blessed him. Joshua became a spiritual giant in his own right, because he was trained by Moses, who was trained by God. Elijah dropped his mantle and Elisha, a young prophet, who was the benefactor of Elijah's teaching, carried on in his absence. The value of his training can be seen in the fact that he knew what to request. His priorities were in place as evidenced by the fact that he requested a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. Elders, are you training any young men in your home church? Who is he, and specifically what are you doing to train him? Do you explain to the men who will one day take your place how you arrive at decisions? Do they know you as a man of strong faith and courage? Do you notice the boys in the church where you live? Are you friendly with them? Do something to show your personal concern. Dale Carnegie can't train New Testament elders. Worldly minded business tycoons can't train New Testament elders. Worldly minded brethren can't do it. Only the seasoned, Godly man whose manner of life reflects deep spiritual commitments is worthy to say, "Be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Our brotherhood deserves to be led in green pastures

and paths of usefulness. May God raise up ten thousand men who will hear the call, bear a burden, and work day and night with purpose and direction.

Unfortunately, crash programs do not keep churches alive on an extended basis. Our National Guard can speedily clean the ruins of a disaster, but the architect takes much longer to build a solid and functional structure of beauty and service. Much of the hysterical action that has occurred in church programming is a reaction more than a plan of action. When the members cry for action we feel pressured to do something, not because we want to or planned to, but because we have been pressured into it. UCLA football coach, Pepper Rodgers, describes pressure as something that comes when you are not qualified to handle a job. He illustrated by saying, "The most pressure I ever felt was when I was in junior high. I played third clarinet in the band, I was no good and faked it all the way. Then one night the first two clarinetists got sick and I had to do a solo; that's pressure."

Robert Kennedy described leadership as the ability to make decisions and then go on living with the consequences. At his death his younger brother Ted, said, "Some men see things as they are and say why. He saw things that were yet to be and said why not."

Godly leadership is of necessity involved with mission, method, messengers and a message. Our mission is of such great importance that the head of the church Himself carefully set forth the work to be accomplished. "For the Son of man has come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). When He had finished all that the Father gave Him to do upon the earth He left instructions for His

disciples to “go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20). Following His resurrection Jesus tested Peter to determine His leadership qualities. In looking for the right motivation within Peter’s heart Jesus asked, “Lovest thou me?” three times. He was charged to “feed my lambs” once, and “feed my sheep” twice (John 21:15-17). Later in his own life Peter brought the main function of church leaders into focus by charging his fellow elders to feed the church of God among you (I Peter 5:2). Paul in Acts 20:28, Peter in I Peter 5:2, and Christ in John 21:15-17 rivet into every elder’s heart, the number one responsibility that you have as God’s leader. The most neglected area of church leadership is the failure of leaders to restore the wayward members. Brethren who quit following Christ are in a worse spiritual condition than before their baptism (II Peter 2:20-22). Elders who are not seeking lost sheep are failing to function at the very point where the need is the greatest. God’s charge to the ancient shepherds was to the point. “But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezekiel

33:6-9). Take away the operation of the physical plant and the spending of money, and then ask yourself, what do I do as an elder? The one responsibility the preacher cannot assign to another member is his preaching preparation and delivery, and the one job that an elder cannot assign to another member is his personal responsibility to bring healing to sick sheep.

In fulfilling our mission we must challenge and provide opportunities within the local church. Christianity was built upon the life and death of the son of God. His name has been preached through the centuries by followers who consider being a Christian a matter of life and death. Paul said, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8). Our influence and works continue for many years after we die. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their words do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). We have emphasized stewardship of earthly possessions during our lifetime, but we also have a responsibility to determine what happens to our earthly possessions when we die. We have talked about what happens to our body and spirit when we die, but what about our earthly possessions? If Jerusalem Christians loved Jesus enough to give their possessions while they were living, surely many Christians in our century love the same Lord enough to leave land, houses, automobiles, insurance policies and bank accounts to fulfill the mission of God's Kingdom. When local congregations plan big and plea fervently, I believe that many brethren will respond in a favorable way. Christian colleges and Children's Homes have benefited some from this approach. Many brethren have had a thirty to forty year

working relationship with one congregation. Are we to believe they don't care what happens to the church when they die? The church can do more with the inheritance from the will than anyone else can. In many cases the children don't really need it. In some cases the inheritance divides the family instead of the family dividing the inheritance. There would not be any competition or rivalry between the local church and the college or the Children's Homes. Ninety-nine percent have never considered leaving it to the church, the college or the Children's Homes, because they haven't been asked.

Untapped rich spiritual resources are in the Lord's church today in the person of many older preachers who are unable to carry the demanding load of local preaching. What they might lack in physical stamina, they more than compensate for with wisdom and knowledge. They cannot do everything, but they can do something. Because they have refused to become bitter men, they have become better men, so let us respect them and not neglect them, use them and not abuse them. Every year many Christians retire from their earthly vocation and travel, and travel, and travel. Many do it because they have time available, and nothing to do. We need to make a plea for these people to use their talent in serving the church.

Godly and visionary leadership is to the church what water and sunshine is to the cotton crop. Without it congregational growth is impossible. Everything depends upon leaders who have extended one hand to God for help, and the other toward men to help. Leadership and faith involve the ability to protect yourself against being defeated by one adversity or becoming egotistical over one success. Church leaders have no right to make small plans for such a

beautiful and gigantic mission. You can stand on the beach of the Gulf of Mexico and see water as far as your vision allows. Some people jump in the water and swim, some jump in and tread water, some jump in and drown, and then there is the person who stands on the shore and just looks. Let us teach men to not be afraid. Let us teach men not to be small in vision and spirit. As Paul Harvey once said, "When little men cast big shadows it is almost sunset." Daniel H. Burnham, a well-known architect and city planner, said,

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty. Think big. Remember that when you create a situation that captures the imagination, you capture life, reason, everything."

"You will never stub your toe standing still. The faster you go the more chance there is of stubbing your toe, but the more chance you have of getting somewhere"—Charles F. Kettering. When we go forward, God is with us. When we stand still or retreat, we do so alone. David Livingston once said to a friend of his, "I will go anywhere for Christ, provided it is forward." Thank you for being a leader in God's church. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:16). "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:4).



## WOMAN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH SCRIPTURAL LIMITATIONS

### HARVEY PORTER

Harvey Porter graduated in 1952 from Abilene Christian College with a major in Bible and a minor in Greek. He is married to the former Sue Gibson, 1950 graduate of ACC and older daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J. P. Gibson of Abilene. They have four children: Paula, who is now attending ACC, Carla, Joel and Sammy. He preached 2½ years in Tyler, Texas. He preached 2 years in Georgetown, Texas. He began in 1956 preaching in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the San Pedro Church of Christ (first preacher there) with 30 members. After 9 years sold all this property and moved to present location of the Montgomery Boulevard Church of Christ in 1965. He has been in Albuquerque for 16 years with the same congregation; present membership is 675. In 1958 made a study trip to British Museum in London, England. Also visited Oxford and Edinburgh, Scotland. During this trip slides were made of Biblical artifacts significant to Archaeology. In 1965 made a trip to London,



Rome, Egypt, Greece and Bible Lands. Photographed sights and artifacts of Biblical significance. In 1969 a study trip was made to the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. Slides were made of more artifacts, especially from Assyria and Babylon. In that same year a study trip was made to the University of Pennsylvania. Slides were made of artifacts from Ancient Sumer, Babylon and Persia. In 1971 a study trip was made to Rome and Cairo with special permission to photograph in the Egyptian Museum. Presentations of this series has been presented to several of our Christian colleges on lecture programs, and to

many congregations in a study series.

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The Twentieth Century will be noted for many things, but without doubt "change" will stand high on the list. Technological changes have greatly affected the creature comforts of man. Ideological changes have produced varying degrees of revolution between young and old, rich and poor, and even male and female. Living in a climate such as this causes us to re-examine many of our values and beliefs. The proposition before us—"Woman's Work In The Church—Scriptural Limitations" takes on a new interest and intrigue. Let us examine the Sacred Writings and see what limitations are placed by the Lord upon the woman as she works in His Church.

#### I Corinthians 14:34-36

We want particularly to notice two "limitation" passages concerning the work of the woman in the church. The first is I Corinthians 14:34ff. and the second is I Timothy 2:11ff. We will analyze the words of each passage and see what dominant themes occur in both and compare these themes with some other passages.

Paul is coming to the close of three chapters in which he has dealt with special problems the Corinthian church has had concerning the spiritual gifts. At this point he writes, "As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if

they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church. What? was it from you that the word of God went forth? or came it unto you alone?" (I Corinthians 14:34-36 ASV)

The command for the women to keep silence in the churches is prefaced by the statement "As in all the churches of the saints." While Paul gave some specific instructions to the Corinthian church, such as their need to take care of the incest problem mentioned in chapter 5, he also gave them instructions that would apply to all other congregations of the church. In chapter 7, as he answers their questions concerning the marriages of believers with unbelievers, he inserts in verse 17 "And so ordain I in all the churches." The woman's silence "in the church" was not for the Corinthians alone. It had the force of apostolic authority for all the churches.

The phrase "keep silent" is translated from the Greek word *sigatosan*. It is present imperative from the verb *sigao*. It meant to continue in silence. This word literally meant "say nothing" (see the following passages where the same word is used: Mark 14:61; Luke 19:40; 20:26; Acts 12:17; 15:12).

Paul uses another strong word in this command—*hupotasso*. It means "subject, subordinate." It is also imperative mood, present tense, and middle voice. They, the women, were to make themselves subordinate continually. This word is used in other passages that relate to the relationship that should exist between the husband and the wife. Ephesians 5:22 records, "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands . . ." and Colossians 3:18 says, "Wives,

be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." Titus 2:5 and I Peter 3:1, 5 use the same word for subordination in the same sense.

He now makes an appeal to Divine Authority by writing "as the law says." What did the law say about the women being in subjection? Or had the law said anything about women being silent in an assembly where men were present?

Most commentators think that Paul was referring to the well-known creation story of Genesis 3:16, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Paul's appeal to this passage would indicate that he considered it a Divine maxim for all time. It was basic to the relationship of man and woman from the very beginning. The note here is "subjection." Her silence in an assembly where men were present would show her respect for God's law in this regard.

Paul then admonishes the women that "if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home." We could pose many questions to this statement; such as, "What if she has no husband?"; "What if he is an unbeliever?"; and "What if he is a believer and does not know anything?" It should be remembered that most were married then and did have husbands. If no husband could answer, there were brothers, sons, and fathers. There were many ways in which the woman's spiritual curiosity could be satisfied without violating God's law of submission.

The apostle adds another reason for her silence. He says, "It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church." Our

word "shame" is from the Greek word *aiskron*, which meant "ugly, shameful, base." Rudolf Bultmann in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, wrote, "From the root *aisk* we also find *aiskros* in the NT in the sense of 'that which is disgraceful' in the judgment of men (I C. 11:6; 14:35), especially as expressed in words (Eph. 5:12) or in relation to filthy lucre (Tt. 1:11)."<sup>1</sup> We see this interesting word in Titus 1:11 translated "*base gain*" in the Revised Standard Version and "*filthy lucre*" in the American Standard Version and the King James Version. In Ephesians 5:12 Paul says, "for the things which are done by them in secret it is a *shame* even to speak of." Bultmann said that this word was used in two places by Paul in the Corinthian letter, i.e. 11:6 and 14:35. The first says, "For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled." The second is "it is a shame for her to speak." It was a shame for her to do anything that would violate this principle of subjection. God's law was subjection, but even in the customs and traditions of both the Greeks and the Jews had come areas of insubordination. R. C. Lenski in commenting on I Corinthians 11, points out that law and custom always go together, and that the custom grows out of the law, or to change the terms, doctrine and practice always go together, and the practice grows out of the doctrine. He goes on to say that it is not the custom as a custom but the significance of a custom which is important.<sup>2</sup> In other words,

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard Kittel, editor, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, W. B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> see Lenski, R. C. *Interpretation of the New Testament, Corinthians*, (Columbus, Wartburg, 1946), p. 432.

why were these things “shameful”? Even their customs attested to the Divine law that the man had authority over the woman. She wore a veil and did not speak out in an assembly of the church where men were present. She was in subjection.

#### I Timothy 2:11-15

We give attention now to the second of the “limitation” passages concerning the work of the woman in the church. Paul wrote Timothy, “Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression: but she shall be saved through her childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.”

Some striking parallels occur when we compare the main words and themes of the Timothy passage with the Corinthian passage. The woman is in *silence* or *quietness* in both. This is *not permitted* in both. She is in *subjection* and has *not dominion*. An allusion is made in both to the Creation and Fall of man. Let us notice the actual wording in both passages:

#### I Timothy 2:11ff

“I permit not a woman . . .”

“but to be in quietness”

“nor to have dominion over a man”

“For Adam was first formed . . .”

## I Corinthians 14:34ff

“it is not permitted unto them (women) . . .”

“let all the women keep silence in . . .”

“let them be in subjection . . .”

“as also saith the law.”

The problem in this passage is Paul's prohibition upon her teaching. You will notice that the prohibition is followed by “nor to have dominion over a man.” The King James Version says, “nor to usurp authority over the man.”

In Titus 2:3 Paul directs that the older women are to be “teachers of that which is good.” In the next verse he specifies that they are to teach “younger women,” not men. In fact he says their teaching of “that which is good” will include this much repeated principle of “being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”

Luke tells us that Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos “the way of God more accurately.”<sup>3</sup> In doing this, they took him to themselves privately, and we would not suppose that Priscilla “had dominion over” either of the men.

It would be helpful for us to consider the comments of some of the noted Bible commentators on this passage and its relation to the Corinthian passage.

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<sup>3</sup> Acts 18:26

N. J. D. White in the *Expositor's Greek New Testament*, wrote, "The point in which Adam's superiority over Eve comes out in the narrative of the Fall is his greater strength of intellect; therefore men are better fitted for the work of public instruction."<sup>4</sup> At this point he quotes Chrysostom who said, "The woman taught once, and ruined all." White continues, "Eve's reasoning faculty was at once overcome by the allegation of jealousy felt by God, an allegation plausible to a nature swayed by emotion rather than by reflection. Adam's better judgment was overcome by personal influence (Gen. 3:17, 'Thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife.');

he was not deceived."<sup>5</sup>

John Peter Lange had this to say: "The Apostle therefore enjoins silence upon them; and in the Jewish synagogues likewise, whose order was followed by the Christian assemblies, it was the rule that women should hear, but not speak."<sup>6</sup>

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges has some rather interesting comments. It says on verse 11, "Let the woman learn in silence"—The reference is still to the public assemblies."<sup>7</sup> Humphreys, the author, continues with verse

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<sup>4</sup> White, N. J. D., *The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdman's 1951) vol. 4, p. 109

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Lange, John Peter, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Thessalonians—Hebrews*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House) p. 33

<sup>7</sup> Humphreys, A. E., *Timothy and Titus, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, (Cambridge, At the University Press, 1897) p. 99.



12, "The direction is made more emphatic by the position of the verb 'to teach' at the beginning of the clause: *But teaching I permit not to a woman*" In verse 13, "The Apostle appeals to the original order and course of things. By inverting this relative position and calling—the helpmate assuming the place of the head or guide, and the head facetly yielding to her governance—was the happy constitution of Paradise overthrown."<sup>8</sup>

William Hendriksen, who is known to most by his excellent commentary on the Revelation, has some astute observations to make. "Though these words and their parallel in I Corinthians 14:33-35 may sound a trifle unfriendly, in reality they are expressive of a feeling of tender and basic understanding. They mean: let a woman not enter a sphere of activity for which by dint of her very creation she is not suited. Let not a bird try to dwell under water. Let not a fish try to live on land. Let not a woman yearn to exercise authority over a man by lecturing him in public worship. For the sake both of herself and of the spiritual welfare of the church such unholy tampering with divine authority is forbidden."<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Hendriksen points out that the woman's role in connection with public worship was not dependent upon those contemporary circumstances, but on two facts that have meaning for all time—the fact of creation and the fact of

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Hendriksen, William, *I-II Timothy and Titus, New Testament Commentary*, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1970) p. 108.

the entrance of sin.<sup>10</sup> In forming or moulding the human pair, God first made Adam; afterward Eve. Not only that, but he made Eve *for the sake of Adam*, to be his helper (Gen. 2:18-25), and his glory (I Cor. 11:7-9). Neither is complete without the other (I. Cor. 11:11). But in his sovereign wisdom God made the human pair in such a manner that it is natural for *him* to lead, for *her* to follow; for *him* to be aggressive, for *her* to be receptive; for *him* to invent, for *her* to use the tools which he invents. The tendency *to follow* was embedded in Eve's very soul as she came forth from the hand of her Creator. Hence, it would not be right to reverse this order in connection with public worship. Why should a woman be encouraged to do things that are contrary to her nature?"<sup>11</sup>

In the light of these comments we might well recall Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28, where he wrote, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." Let us here realize that Paul is speaking of salvation for all. Male and female are equally precious before the Father. Even though they are heirs of the same riches, their areas of service and responsibility in His house are different. His apostles were men. Elders in all the churches were men. Those who led in the public proclamation of the Gospel were men. Women served in subordinate areas that were equally necessary to the on-going of the Kingdom.

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p. 109-110.

Dorcas was a woman "full of good works and almsdeeds which she did."<sup>12</sup> Paul's portrait of godly women in his letters to Timothy included such things as: "well reported of for good works,"<sup>13</sup> "if she hath brought up children,"<sup>14</sup> "if she hath used hospitality to strangers,"<sup>15</sup> "if she hath relieved the afflicted."<sup>16</sup> "I desire therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, rule the household."<sup>17</sup> In all these works her more tender and loving nature is utilized by God for His service.

## CONCLUSIONS

Having studied these passages we seek now to come to some conclusions concerning the woman's role in the church. We see that the principle of silence is linked to the principle of subjection and difference between the sexes. This principle of subjection has its foundation in the Genesis account of creation and the fall. It is important to realize that Paul's directions were not given on the spur of the moment because of the particular situation of a local church during the first century. Dr. Charles C. Ryrie has summarized the point well. He wrote, "Subordination, dependence, and difference of nature are the three reasons the early church assigned for the

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<sup>12</sup> Acts 9:36

<sup>13</sup> I Timothy 5:10

<sup>14</sup> I Timothy 5:10

<sup>15</sup> I Timothy 5:10

<sup>16</sup> I Timothy 5:10

<sup>17</sup> I Timothy 5:14

non-participation of women in public vocal ministry, and this regulation of silence was not grounded in special and temporary conditions in the church, but was related to a far more basic and fundamental reason, that is, the difference in position and nature of male and female. These are the facts whether we like them or not, and this appears to be the only solution which makes all the texts consistent with one another. Whether this agrees with present-day practice is beside the point. A very serious student of the Word of God first seeks to discover its meaning and standards and then, and only then, to bring practice into conformity with it. Biblical principles determine Biblical practice, and the principle of silence was the principle of the first century church."<sup>18</sup>

It is said that in many places our present society has no regard for God's plan for the human family. We who love Jesus and His church must hold to His teachings whether they be popular or not. Let us use patience, love and kindness in applying these age-old principles today in the church.

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<sup>18</sup> Ryrie, Charles C., *The Place of Women in the Church*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1968) p. 79.

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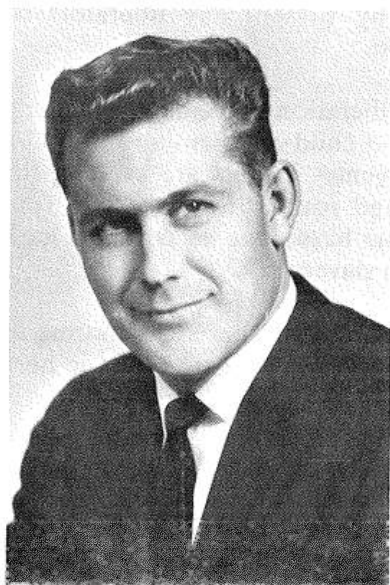
## OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

E. DANIEL SPANN

E. Daniel Spann was born in Dickson County, Tennessee, and grew up in Nashville, Tennessee. He served in the U. S. Army for three years, part of this time being located in Germany. He then attended David Lipscomb College, graduating in 1962 with a B.A. degree in Speech. He has done graduate work at Harding Graduate School and Abilene Christian College.

He began full-time preaching work in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1963, serving the Tiftonia and Ridgedale congregations in that city. While in Chattanooga, he was one of the founders and directors of the Greater Chattanooga Children's Home. In 1969 he began work with the Meadowbrook church in Fort Worth, Texas.

He has held meetings in Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama,



Florida, South Carolina, Texas, and mission meetings sponsored by the Meadowbrook church in Connecticut and Long Island, New York. In 1966 he was one of a group who conducted a campaign for Christ at Hahn Air Force Base in Germany. While there, he spoke at the annual Frankfurt Lectures.

He is married to the former Carolyn Krause. They have three children: Mike, 7; Rebecca, 5; and Philip, 4.

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“You’ve come a long way, baby.” These are the

very irreverent words of a former television commercial designed to sell a specially designed cigarette to the female population.

If education has made more and more American women feel trapped, frustrated, guilty as housewives, surely this should be seen as a clear signal that women have outgrown the housewife role.<sup>1</sup>

Given enough time, if certain currents prevail, greater numbers of "liberated women" will have their pretty lips wrapped around "stogies" as they pick up their pay checks (equal to the man's) and go to a football game or baseball game or horse race to watch "liberated women" compete in contests that previously had been "no-gals-land." True enough, our society has many inequities. However, much of the distance being travelled by present day liberators of women is in the wrong direction.

Leaders of the Woman's Liberation movement are urging women to leave their children at child-care centers and find a job requisite with their intelligence. Others are pushing for nationwide abortion reform and round-the-clock state supported child care centers. Some have gone so far as to look on marriage as being equal with slavery.

How does a Christian woman keep her solid footing in the face of all this? What opportunities are there for her?

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<sup>1</sup>Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, (New York: Dell Publishers, 1963), p. 308.



Should she go all out for “Woman’s Lib” with its “girlcotts,” “womaniestoes” and everything else?

The issue is being further clouded by the liberal views of certain religious groups. The following quotations will reveal the changing attitude from liberty to license:

The number of our students during the session now closing is the greatest reported for many years . . . In our list you will find the names of five women, one of them a married woman, wife of a male student. These were matriculated on the responsibility of the faculty because of their desire to study the Bible as a means of greater efficiency in the work of the Sunday school and of missions. Two of them are candidates of foreign mission work and one is to go to Japan within a few weeks. We trust that the Board will approve this innovation. Someone remarked after we had admitted some of these, that they will soon be turning out female preachers; but I replied, that by the time they studied the Scriptures with us they will learn that women are not to be preachers.—J. W. McGarvey, President. <sup>2</sup>

In 1905 women students in a Christian college were an “innovation.” In 1953, Dr. Riley B. Montgomery, then the President of the same school, wrote in answer to an inquiry:

The College of the Bible accepts women for the Bachelor of Divinity degree because we believe that women should have the opportunity to share equally with men in Christian work and leadership Among Disciples of Christ churches,

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<sup>2</sup>“President’s Annual Report,” The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, June 5, 1905, quoted by Mossie Allman Wyker, *Church Women in the Scheme of Things*, (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1953), p. 13.

women may accept calls to churches as ministers and perform all the responsibilities that are called for in the pastorate of churches. We believe that if women desire to prepare themselves for the pastoral ministry they should have the opportunity to do so . . . We believe that women should have the same right to ordination for any position in the church that is accorded to man . . . We would recommend women to the local churches for ordination as readily as we would men.<sup>3</sup>

There you have it—two extremes and both of them wrong: in the first instance, restriction of women from even entering Christian colleges, and the other, putting women into the pulpit. It behooves modern day Christians not to be guilty of either of these false views.

There does not exist a healthy understanding and attitude toward woman's role in the churches. In fact, the church is divided in its thinking about the place of women in the modern world and in the church. This division has resulted from three basic erroneous ideas which have contributed greatly to the suppression of woman in the Lord's work. The first of these is the idea that because woman is to be subject to her husband and is restricted from performing certain public functions, it necessarily follows that she is inferior. Not only is she not inferior, the Christian woman is the only truly liberated woman. Jesus set woman free and placed her on the same spiritual plane as man. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free,

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<sup>3</sup>Mossie Allman Wyker, D. D., *Church Women in the Scheme of Things*, (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1953), pp. 14, 15.

there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). This paper, “Opportunities for Women,” is an attempt to say that in the realm of the mental and the spiritual, neither sex is superior, and all persons should have equal opportunity to use their God-given talents and abilities.

On this point a woman has written:

Church women should restudy their New Testament and get the right perspective about themselves. Those women deserve no sympathy who dress in mannish style and become very assertive as they look wistfully to the other side, longing to be men. If we were born women, then women we must be! The first step in achieving a normal, balanced life is to accept ourselves as women and rejoice in that privilege. For Christians, this is especially true; in no other area is so much offered for the development of a full, rounded life as to those who are followers of that One called “The Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

The second of these mistakes is the false notion that “church work” is confined to public acts of speaking in assemblies of the saints such as preaching, leading prayers, leading singing and the like. A third mistake is to ignore the prominence of woman’s role in the early church. Perhaps the greatest achievement this paper can make is to give the total picture of the Apostolic woman’s achievements for the Lord.

The Apostolic Age is normally thought of as only the age of the Apostles. If a person should “penknife” every

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<sup>4</sup>Wyker, *Ibid*, p. 6.

reference to and action of women from the history and life of the church, the result would be a ragged Bible. Immediately after Christ's ascension, women gathered with the Apostles and disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 1:12-14). C. C. Ryrie observes:

They were not there to cook for the men but to pray with them, and there is certainly no reason to believe that they were not included in the group who prayed for Judas' successor.<sup>5</sup>

The record is silent concerning the initial response of women to the Gospel. After the death of Ananias and Sapphira "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). During Saul's persecution he entered "every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:8; 9:2). The Spirit expressly mentions that Philip's preaching resulted in people in Samaria being baptized "both men and women" (Acts 8:12-13). Prayer meetings were held in the homes of women (Acts 12:12). In fact, every time a "house-church" is mentioned in the New Testament, it is always in connection with a woman (Rom, 16:3; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:16; Philemon 1-2).

The first European convert was a woman named Lydia, "a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira" (Acts 16:14). In Thessalonica and Berea "honorable women" obeyed the Lord (Acts 17:4,12). Priscilla and Aquilla taught the young man

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<sup>5</sup>Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Place of Women in the Church*, (New York: The McMillan Co., 1958), p. 53.

Apollos more accurately the way of the Lord (Acts 18:26). They were noted as fellow-workers with Paul. This couple is mentioned six times in the scriptures and four of these times Priscilla's name is first. Philip, the evangelist, one of the seven, had four virgin daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8, 9).

In Romans 16:1-15 Paul mentions 27 names and refers to them as having helped him in some way. At least seven of these are women (Phoebe, Mary, Priscilla, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis and Julia).

Paul has sometimes been accused of being a woman-hater or at least lacking in due respect towards women. The sixteenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans is sufficient evidence to refute such false charges.

From the beginning to the end, the writer chooses with most apt consideration, the title and merit which belongs to each member of the household of God and recognizes the special work which a woman, and often only a woman can do in the church.<sup>6</sup>

Phoebe is referred to as a "servant" (deaconess), which has led some to want to appoint deaconesses. These individuals see the qualifications for deaconesses in I Timothy 3:11.

There are two women at Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche,

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<sup>6</sup>R. J. Knowling, *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905), p. 43.

who "labored with me (Paul) in the gospel." While other passages will not allow these women to teach and to usurp authority over the man, it is doubtful to this writer that their work consisted only of cooking, cleaning, and sewing.

C. C. Ryrie quotes Harnack, who rightly said:

No one who reads the New Testament . . . can fail to notice that in the apostolic and sub-apostolic age women played an important role in the propaganda of Christianity and throughout the Christian communities.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to these concrete examples, the Bible contains much positive instruction which points out the opportunities for women.

The first line of attack is the most obvious, the home. The good Christian homemaker is among the Lord's greatest assets. Peter tells of the leavening influence of a Godly wife (I Pet. 3:1-7). Child-bearing, which to the modern day, "liberated woman" is a "drag," is a great work of the Godly woman (I Tim. 2:15). The good Christian homemaker glorifies God as only she can and her good behavior is in keeping with sound doctrine. "But speak thou the things which befit sound doctrine . . . that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be soberminded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in

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<sup>7</sup>Ryrie, *The Place of Women in the Church* p. 53.

subjection to their own husbands that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).

In every congregation of the Lord’s people there are young wives and mothers whose husbands, houses and children are unkept. Where are the classes that deal with these matters? Where are “aged women” who give their time in teaching these young women the fine art of loving a husband, loving children and being keepers at home? This is one of the Lord’s commandments that is grossly ignored. The result is that sound doctrine is not upheld and the word of God is blasphemed.

Dr. Herbert Ratner of Chicago said in an address to mothers:

The world today needs great mothers and the children they give us. We need these children because we need enriched families to leaven our neighborhoods, our communities, our country, and the world. We need them in the fight against poverty and injustice, wherever this may be, at home and abroad. We need them for the peace of the world. We need them to supply the Peace Corps, to supply teachers, physicians, religious and social workers, engineers, and others to the underdeveloped countries. We will always need quality, whatever our numbers.

I urge you not to listen to the voice of cowardice, those who preach parents’ rights rather than children’s rights, those who proclaim self concern rather than selfless concern. I urge you instead to remember that this country in particular is not suffering from a glut of good families, and it is doubtful whether we can ever suffer from an overpopulation of children who are reared to seek their happiness in other people’s happiness.

Therefore I urge you to see to it that you are not robbed of your great vocation. A child may be the greatest gift you

can give your country and the world, to say nothing about God, because to help the weak, we need the strong, and to help the children of the weak, we need the children of the strong.

That is why we turn to you who have dedicated your lives to good mothering, because nothing in the world can prevent a mother from passing on to her children virtue, selflessness and love. All she has to do is to possess them herself.<sup>8</sup>

There are two groups of women that should be utilized more; the first of these is the widows and the second is mothers whose children are away at school or married. Paul gives us a Biblical precedent for a special arrangement for the widows. "Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work" (I Tim. 5:9, 10). This is a lengthy list of "opportunities for women." Why the necessity of such requirements? Obviously because the "desolate" widow was cared for by the church (cf Acts 6). But what was the enrollment? Were they merely to receive financial aid? It seems a marvelous opportunity for the church to utilize these "desolate" ladies in the program of the church continually showing hospitality, serving the saints and relieving the afflicted as their physical necessities are being supplied by the church.

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<sup>8</sup>Dr. Herbert Ratner, quoted by Layne Baldrige, *20th Century Christian*, July, 1971, p. 15.



Women have an unparalleled opportunity to be active in evangelization of the local community. The Bible both teaches and gives examples of women teaching. Aged women are to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3). Priscilla aided her husband in the private teaching of Apollos (Acts 18:26). Who can measure the extent of the influence of Lois and Eunice who taught the scripture to Timothy from a child (II Tim. 1:5; 3:15). There are unparalleled opportunities for women to teach their neighbors during the daytime while their husbands are away at work. Why not plan a "coffee cottage class"?

The "Thursday School" idea is catching on in many communities as young and old ladies alike "give themselves" to at least a full day of teaching the Bible and Bible-related subjects to neighborhood children. This concept accomplishes several things. First, it gives ladies of the church an opportunity to serve in a worthwhile capacity. It also offers a much-needed service as overworked and over-burdened mothers are given a brief but beautiful reprieve from everyday duties. Thirdly, the school opens doors of opportunity into neighborhood homes. Most importantly, young lives are taught Jesus and the principles of Christianity.

The role of women in the benevolence of the church is indispensable, Phoebe's service was acclaimed (Rom. 16:3). Luke tells the beautiful story of Dorcas, who was "full of good works and almsdeeds" (Acts 9:36). Adoption of foster children into Christian homes is among the greatest works that can be done for time or for eternity. This is pure religion (James 1:27). Our concept of church work and pure religion needs to be re-evaluated, as indicated in the following quotation.

I heard a criticism of a young mother, who with much personal sacrifice, had taken two foster children into her home: "I don't know why she took those children when she has her own to look after. They're just keeping her from the Lord's work."<sup>9</sup>

One of the reasons people lack opportunities in the Lord's work is simply because they cannot recognize the Lord's work when they see it.

"Visiting the widows" is an area that is a lost frontier. Our concept of visiting is to go by and "set a spell." The New Testament, apostolic concept of visiting is to go by and mow their lawn, clean their windows, repair their doors, change their light bulbs, mop their floors, and a hundred other things they can no longer do for themselves. Here alone are enough opportunities for women to keep an army of ladies busy for years.

The Madison church has pioneered in the area of a program called "Meals on Wheels."

Each day at the church building—Monday through Friday we prepare hot meals for the elderly people in the community who are unable physically (and sometimes financially) to prepare one balanced meal a day for themselves . . . On Saturday our teen-age girls do the cooking and delivering.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Bobbie Lee Holley, "Toward Greater Usefulness," *20th Century Christian*, July, 1971, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Ira North, "Meals on Wheels," *20th Century Christian*, August, 1971, p. 13.

Here is a program that utilizes at least 76 ladies and girls every week. With such a program there is no need for anyone to say "there is nothing for me to do."

The opportunities for women in the church today are unlimited. They have the ability, the spiritual power and the inner security to do a great work for our God. We have not used to the fullest the Lord's reserves and resources in the past. May God help us to do a better job in the future.

